The Washington Monthly

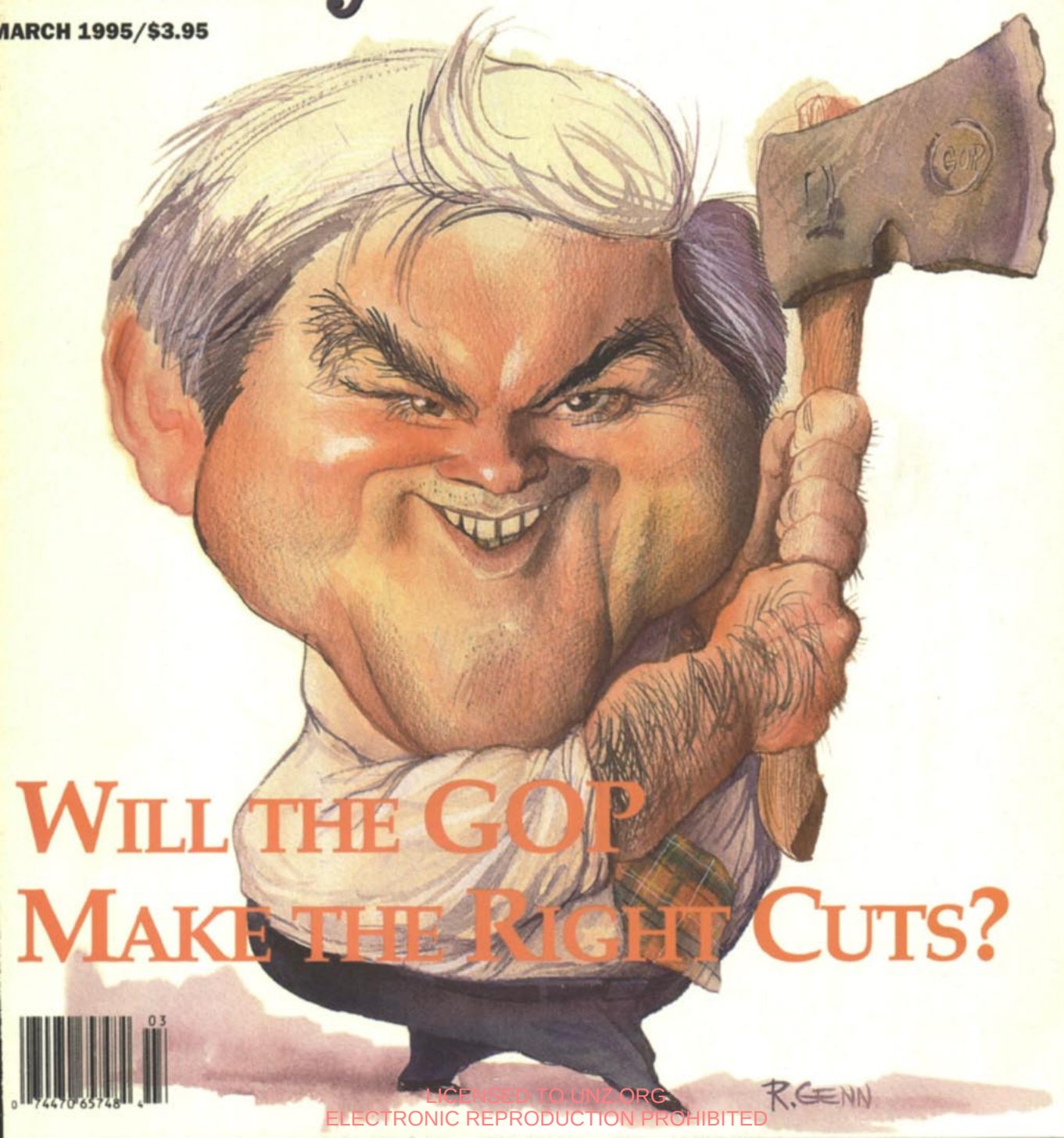
MARCH 1995/$3.95

Jonathan Alter on the best and the worst of Clinton

Morton Mintz on what the media misses

Harris Wofford on health reform's future

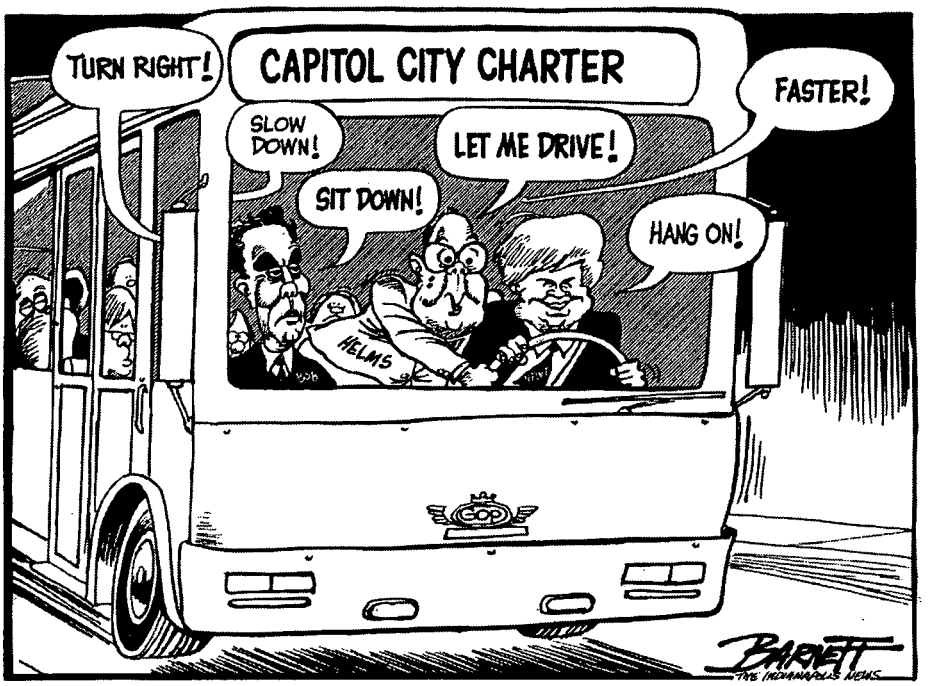
Glenn Frankel on burning Bush



WILL THE GOP MAKE THE RIGHT CUTS?

03
0 74470 65748 4

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Reprinted with permission of Creator's Syndicate

IT'S GOING TO BE A BUMPY RIDE!

There is intellectual refuge from the impending onslaught. Arm yourself with *Liberal Opinion Week*. Each week *Liberal Opinion Week* brings you 32 pages of fact, opinion and thought- provoking commentary from more than 60 of the nation's most respected syndicated columnists and cartoonists —with no advertising.

It's going to be a rough two years.
Let *Liberal Opinion Week* soften your ride.

To order call: **1-800-338-9335**

SPECIAL OFFER: 13 Weekly Issues for $10.50

FEATURED COLUMNISTS—EVERY COLUMN, EVERY WORD
Molly Ivins, Mary McGrory, Richard Cohen, Jesse Jackson, Calvin Trillin, Lars-Erik Nelson, Deb Price, Linda Ellerbee, Dave Barry, David Broder, David Nyhan, Neal Peirce, Art Buchwald, Russell Baker, Ralph Nader, Nat Hentoff, Clarence Page, Ellen Goodman, Anna Quindlen, Mark Shields, Cynthia Tucker, Anderson & Binstein, Cohen & Solomon, Tony Kornheiser, Alexander Cockburn, James Hoagland

CONTRIBUTING COLUMNISTS—SELECTED COLUMNS WEEKLY, IN FULL
Les Payne, Donald Kaul, Andy Rooney, Colman McCarthy, Mark Russell, Robert Reno, Anthony Lewis, Gemond & Witcover, Christopher Mathews, William Pfaff, Carl Rowan, Murray Kempton, William Raspberry, Hobart Rowen, Jimmy Breslin, Roger Simon, Mike Royko, Michael Kinsley

CONTRIBUTING CARTOONISTS
Jules Feiffer, 'Herblock', Duane Powell, Tom Toles, Dan Wasserman, Steve Sack, Doug Marlette, Jim Borgman, Mike Luckovich, Mike Peters, Taylor Jones, Ted Rall, Paul Szep, Jeff Danziger, Tom Tomorrow, Paul Conrad, Eleanor Mill, Bill Schorr, Rob Rogers, Joe Sharpnack

LIBERAL OPINION WEEK P.O. Box 468, Vinton, Ia 52349

Send a 13-week introductory subscription for $10.50
One-year subscription (52 weekly issusues) for $42.00
Check enclosed ☐ VISA ☐ M.C. ☐ Bill Me
Card# _____ Exp. _____
Name _____
Address _____ Apt. _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
(Foreign postage add $25.00, $6.50 for 13-week offer.) G

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Volume 27, Number Three March 1995

The Washington Monthly

4 Tilting at Windmills *by Charles Peters*
Betsey's complaint . . . Bruce Babbitt and the private bath . . . The GOP and the Mob . . . and other odds and ends. . . .

10 Stories the Media Miss *by Morton Mintz*
The Big Four newspapers are missing stories that affect you directly.

15 Police Protection in D.C.: Separate and Unequal
by Michael K. Mayo and Nancy Beiles
Washington's best cops patrol the city's safest neighborhoods.

WILL THE GOP MAKE THE RIGHT CUTS?

20 Newt's Minions *by Amy Waldman*
You won't see them on C-Span, but staffers in Congress run the show. Here's the inside skinny on the new generation of Republicans.

26 The Case for (Some) Regulation *by Joshua Wolf Shenk*
By not distinguishing between good and bad regulations, the GOP could do more harm than good.

34 The Case for (Some) Regulation, Part 2 *by Gareth G. Cook*
Do you really think the car companies voluntarily installed airbags?

ON POLITICAL BOOKS

41 Usually First, Not Always Classy *by Jonathan Alter*
The best of Clinton, the worst of Clinton: A new biography carefully traces both back to their roots.

44 Burning Bush *by Glenn Frankel*
A new book by former Israeli foreign minister Moshe Arens claims that Bush betrayed Israel. The *real* betrayal was right under Arens's nose.

49 Bloody Bosnia *by George Kenney*
David Rieff's howl of genocide misses the mark. But Tom Gjelten coolly probes the underbelly of a tragic war.

54 Wartime Allies *by Herbert Mitgang*
Churchill was right. Americans and Britons did have a special relationship—thousands of them between English women and American servicemen.

57 Political Booknotes *Reviews by Harris Wofford and John Morton Blum*

DEPARTMENTS

2 Letters
14 Political Book Award
18 Who's Who
25 Memo of the Month
33 Tidbits and Outrages
48 Monthly Journalism Award
60 Political Puzzle

Cover art by Roman Genn

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Letters

Raucous Caucus

In "Tilting at Windmills," [January/February], you praised Speaker Gingrich and the Republicans for eliminating taxpayer support for "caucuses" like the Steel Caucus or the Textile Caucus.

First, not all caucuses received taxpayer support. During the 103rd Congress, I belonged to the Northeast Midwest Coalition and the Steel Caucus (among others). The Northeast Midwest Coalition did receive taxpayer support, but the Steel Caucus did not. My decision to join the Coalition was based solely on my interest in receiving the information and assistance it provided on issues such as Great Lakes environmental protection. I received no pressure from any outside source.

In contrast, my decision to join the Steel Caucus was motivated by inquiries from LTV Steel, a major employer in the Cleveland area. Without taxpayer support, it was the steel industry that funded the Steel Caucus.

You claim that the "taxpayer-supported caucuses" had become tools of special interest groups. In fact, the opposite was true.

Second, the phrase "taxpayer supported" implies that there was a line item in the congressional budget for these organizations. In fact, the federally financed caucuses were funded by contributions from individual members' office budgets. For example, the $2,500 I contributed to the Northeast Midwest Coalition each year came from funds that I would have otherwise used for staff, mailing, or travel. In essence, members of Congress from the Northeast and Midwest were pooling their resources to hire experts in certain policy areas, avoiding duplication.

Since the Republicans did not cut the budgets of individual offices, the move will not save any money.

Eric D. Fingerhut
Cleveland, OH
The author was a congressman from 1993 to 1994.

Goofy Gossip

Shame on the *Monthly* for publishing the self-congratulatory insider's explanation of the Disney Corporation's decision to withdraw its plans for development in Prince William County, Virginia ["How Washington Insiders Ambushed Mickey Mouse," December 1994]. I count on the *Monthly* to provide new insights into events and policies, not horse-race polls, insider gossip, or self-promotion.

While I am sure that the events you report are true, the picture is incomplete.

Financial reports for 1994 showed attendance (and profits) at all the theme parks down while the film side (particularly *The Lion King*) was making the third quarter the most profitable in corporate history.

At the end of September, the project faced a go/no-go decision, and Disney decided to pull the plug. It cited environmental objection and nationally induced delays as a cover. It suggested that it was seeking other sites as a political shield for Governor George Allen and others who had gone out on a limb for the company.

I have no objection to insiders or the Piedmont Environmental Council claiming "credit" for their own purposes. But good journalists should not confuse such assertions with facts.

Frank Blechman
George Mason University,
Fairfax, VA

Charles W. Bailey replies: The article did discuss—though not in detail—Disney's internal problems and the impact of Michael Eisner's illness. Mr. Blechman is certainly entitled to his opinion as to why the project was abandoned, but good academicians should not confuse such assertions with facts.

Dumb Bell

After reading Gregg Easterbrook's analysis of Charles Murray's book ["The Case Against *The Bell Curve*," December 1994], I'd like to make one point that seems to have been completely overlooked.

In the very title of the book, Mr. Murray refers to the bell curve—a.k.a. the standard distribution curve. Generally, graphs of such varying attributes as height, weight, and (in this case) IQ tend to form a bell-shaped curve: low on both extremes, with a big, evenly shaped bell in the middle.

Psychometricians, the people who design IQ tests and other such instruments, have a great respect for the bell curve. If you create a new test, you know you're probably on the money if the resulting scores form a bell curve. When the test results look more like an electrocardiogram, the test designers go back to the drawing board.

If Murray's premise were correct, black IQ scores would form a nice bell curve 15 points to the left of white scores (and, let's not forget, 30 points

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to the left of Asian scores). Instead, his chart of black IQ scores resembles the peaks of the High Sierras.

Most likely, the uneven IQ chart reflects African-Americans' unequal access to education over the past century. If you can't read English well, you're not likely to perform appropriately on a written test. If your vocabulary is limited, you're not likely to shine on the oral test.

Elizabeth Austin
Oak Park, IL

Off the Curve

In "The Case Against The Bell Curve" [December 1994], Gregg Easterbrook incorrectly says that the Bradley Foundation "is currently underwriting William Kristol." This is not so. I did conduct a project for the Bradley Foundation during 1993, but since then I have been directing the Project for the Republican Future, a political organization which, alas, is ineligible for foundation support.

William Kristol
Washington, DC

Raging Bell

I read with astonishment and dismay Art Levine's ostensibly facetious "book review" ["The Jew Curve," December 1994], which is in actuality a surprisingly snide and virulent denigration of the author of *The Bell Curve*.

Please understand that I have no love for Charles Murray. But as United States Attorney in New Orleans during the initial school desegregation, I came to have some slight acquaintance with vicious personal attacks, and I saw and experienced the hurt and damage they cause. I despised such tactics then, and I despise them now.

M. Hepburn Many
Mandeville, LA

Way to G(a)O!

Without taking issue with the central theme of John Heilemann's article ["Proof That Gingrich & Co. Don't Know What They're Doing," January/February], I want to point out that his characterization of the report issued by the National Academy of Public Administration ["The Role, Mission, and Operations of the U.S. General Accounting Office," October 1994] is inaccurate.

Nowhere does the NAPA report include the words put in quotes by Heilemann ("exceeded its appropriate role"). The NAPA study does not suggest, as the article claims, that the "GAO now spends too much time analyzing programs, and should instead pull down its green eyeshades and get back to auditing." On the contrary, it suggests the opposite.

The report strongly and consistently supports GAO's having a continued and even an increased role in program evaluations. The panel argues that GAO should shift its "perspectives and methods from promoting process-oriented control to examining the root causes of problems in order to help improve the effectiveness of program outcomes." This does not, in my judgment, describe "green eyeshade" auditing.

Alan K. Campbell
Washington, DC

Corrections

Due to a printing error, a line was dropped from David Evans's book review last issue. The bottom of page 42 should have read: "Robert Gates, then deputy national security advisor and present at this key meeting, recalled: 'What was striking about this episode was that the military put their gigantic requirements on the table—moving VII Corps from Europe, six carrier battle groups, activating more reserves—and Bush did not blanch.'"

In the same issue, the author of *Newhouse* was incorrectly identified. Thomas Maier is still a reporter for *Newsday*.

The Washington Monthly

Editor in Chief Charles Peters
Publisher Hilary M. Ross
Editors Gareth G. Cook, Daniel Franklin, Joshua Wolf Shenk, Amy Waldman
Contributing Editors
Jonathan Alter, Thomas N. Bethell, Tom Bethell, Taylor Branch, Matthew Cooper, Gregg Easterbrook, James Fallows, Christopher Georges, Paul Glastris, Mickey Kaus, Phil Keisling, Michael Kinsley, Nicholas Lemann, Suzannah Lessard, Arthur Levine, Jon Meacham, Joseph Nocera, Leonard Reed, John Rothchild, Jonathan Rowe, David Segal, Walter Shapiro, Scott Shuger, Steven Waldman
Editorial Advisory Board
Charles W. Bailey, James David Barber, Edgar Cahn, David Halberstam, Murray Kempton, Richard Reeves, Hugh Sidey
Assistants to the Editor
Pam Matthews, Michael Mayo
Business Manager Kristine Norquist
Production Manager Mark J. Lilback
Interns Faye Elliot, Sunil Iyengar, Tom Mulier, Matt Opalack
Proofers T. King Carvell, Alan Greenblatt

Subscription rates: U.S. and possessions: one year, $39.50; two years, $74; three years, $105. For Canadian and foreign subscriptions, add $7 for surface delivery; air mail delivery add $32. Back issues, $5.00. Send correspondence concerning subscriptions, undelivered copies, and changes of address to Box 587, Mount Morris IL, 61054. For change of address, please provide six weeks' notice and include old address label. *The Washington Monthly* is indexed in the Book Review Index, Political Science Abstracts, Public Affairs Information Service, the Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, the Social Science Index, and Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory and may be obtained on microfilm from University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. For reprint rights for all or part of an article call Mark Lilback at (202) 462-0128. Published monthly except combined January/February and July/August issues by The Washington Monthly Company, 1611 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009 (202) 462-0128. Printed in U.S.A.

© 1995 The Washington Monthly Co. All rights reserved. Reproduction by any method whatsoever without permission is prohibited.

ISSN 0043-0633. Postmaster: Send change of address to *The Washington Monthly*, Box 587, Mount Morris IL, 61054. Second class postage paid at Mechanicsburg, PA. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tilting at Windmills

If you have thought the Republicans take too simple-minded a hard line on crime, I have evidence their position is actually far more subtly nuanced than you might have realized. Among those sending congratulatory birthday telegrams to retired mob boss Joseph "Joe Bananas" Bonanno, who now lives in Arizona, were the state's Republican governor Fife Symington and Republican senator John McCain. . . .

On December 30, just two days before the Postal Service raised the price of a stamp to 32 cents, it put 80 million new 29 cent stamps on sale. The stamps commemorate the Chinese new year, which by the way, wasn't going to take place until well into *our* new year, and well after the 32 cent rate took effect. . . .

Although Al Gore's reinventing government crusade was supposed to cut the fat in the middle of the bureaucracy, it has in fact resulted in an increase in the number of people in grades 11 through 13, while the bulk of the cuts have come at the bottom in levels 1 through 10. The median pay of the remaining white collar civil servants actually *rose* by $3,500.

The number of employees in the most populous of the middle grades, GS 11 through GS 13, actually increased from a total of 594,000 in March 1993 to 600,000 at the end of the 1994 fiscal year. There are, according to *The Washington Post*'s authoritative Mike Causey, "a lot more" GS 15s at the top of the middle grades making up to $93,000 than there are GS 3s at $20,000. The most employees in any grade are the 235,000 GS 12s whose salaries top off at $56,000. . . .

Among the proposals to privatize government functions, one of the most frequent is to turn trash and garbage collection over to free enterprise. If you live in the New York area, you are probably aware that there are certain hazards in this course of action, mainly that the mob has controlled the industry there for a long time. It dominated private trash hauling in New York City as long ago as 1952. I know because I had a girlfriend whose family was involved. And just last month, indictments were returned in Long Island against Luchese-group killers for the murder of two trash executives who had refused to accept Mafia control. . . .

Another caution about privatization comes from *The Wall Street Journal*'s Timothy Noah, who reports that while the Department of Energy has 20,000 federal employees, its efforts to privatize over the years have produced 140,000 contract employees who work for companies and laboratories performing such tasks as research and nuclear plant site clean-up for the department. The average private employee costs the taxpayer $120,000 in salary and benefits, while the same bill for the federal employee is $90,000. . . .

Those who suspect that some of their tax dollars are wasted will find confirmation in the Associated Press report that $5.1 million has been spent on security for cabinet secretaries at the following departments: Agriculture, Commerce, Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Labor, Transportation, and Veteran's Affairs. Why do any of these people need to be guarded? And speaking of Interior, Bruce Babbitt is wasting $70,000 to move his public affairs director from one floor to another so they can be "closer"—is there something you want to tell us, Bruce?—and the public affairs director will have a private bath. What is going on here?

So there *are* outrageous examples of waste. But what many people fail to stop and think is that, while wasteful government is bad, incompetent government can be even worse. Consider two recent examples.

A story from *The Washington Post* revealed that repeat drunk driving offenders keep their driver's licenses until they kill innocent people. "Only 27 percent of the 18,330 drivers certified by the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles as habitual offenders had their driving privileges revoked." The other 73 percent are still out there speeding down the highway recklessly endangering the lives of the rest of us.

Then there is the story of the mental patient who, despite having repeatedly been certified as violent, was let out of a New York State facility, only to push an innocent woman to her death in front of a subway train.

In both cases, don't you really want not less government, but better government that will protect

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

you from foreseeable dangers?

And are you quite so sure that you want to devolve everything to state and local government when you stop and think just where were the screw-ups in these cases? . . .

You've read all the articles about Japan's decline that have appeared in the last year or so implying, if they do not actually say, that we no longer need to worry about competition from the Land of the Rising Sun. Well, it now turns out that, according to a recent article by James Bennet in *The New York Times*, Japan's share of the U.S. car market *rose* in 1994. . . .

In January, six District of Columbia school board members accepted pay raises. What's wrong with that, you ask? The answer is that, not only is the District in absolutely incredible financial peril, but these same members went on record opposing the raise three months earlier—a "non-binding" resolution it turns out. This attempt to have their cake and eat it too reminds me of Newt Gingrich, who having campaigned against the congressional pension system as too lavish, quietly decided in 1989 to include himself in on the deal. When Robert Novak asked him not long ago, "Are you ready to go on record that this is an outrage that should be eliminated," Gingrich replied that he was "not ready to make the commitment." . . .

Even if Newt Gingrich gives in on pension reform, there's a good chance it will be found unconstitutional. The reason was in a recent *Wall Street Journal* article that seemed optimistic about reform but ended with this depressingly perceptive observation by Jerry Brown: "The judges, who are themselves well-pensioned, will never allow it.". . .

A recent *U.S. News* poll found that 56 percent of Americans believe that "lawyers use the legal system to protect the powerful and get rich," and that 62 percent feel the average American has "much less" access to justice than the rich. My own experience—including growing up in a lawyer's family, three years of law school, four years practicing law, and many more years observing and writing about lawyers—suggests that the people responding to the poll know what they are talking about.

It is no wonder that so many members of the legal profession are no longer proud of what they do or happy doing it. Some do lead honorable lives devoted to justice and the sensible reconciliation of conflicting interests. Some, not most. Some have really interesting work to do. Some, not most. So why devote your life to a profession that is likely to be unworthy and dull.

My friend, the columnist Colman McCarthy, has a suggestion for another career: elementary public school teaching, where good people are desperately needed. Males especially. Eighty-eight percent of elementary school teachers are women. Everybody knows that male role models are in short supply in the ghettos. So this is work that can really mean something. "I realize," one male teacher told McCarthy, "that if my kids don't get the basic skills by the time they are in sixth grade, their chances are so limited that it's like a ticket to trouble." Isn't giving these kids the skills they need more important than winning another loophole for Philip Morris?

One of the *Monthly*'s young editors read the foregoing and wrote his comment: "A perversion of Allen Ginsberg's line keeps running through my mind: 'The best minds of my generation are going to law school.'"

All of these people could be doing useful work, work that they could be proud of. It is tragic that

Common Ground

Where Can Liberals and Conservatives Agree?

APRIL 19, 1995

The University Club
Washington, D.C.
9:00 AM - 5:30 PM
$50 per person (lunch included)

FOR TICKETS, write:
Conference
The Washington Monthly
1611 Connecticut Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20009

SPONSORED BY THE MANHATTAN INSTITUTE, CITY JOURNAL, AND THE WASHINGTON MONTHLY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they will be lost to what Sol Linowitz, in his recent book about lawyering at the end of the twentieth century, called "The Betrayed Profession." Linowitz, before becoming Xerox's CEO, was a practicing lawyer in Rochester, New York in the fifties which he recalls as a world of "trust and respect where conflicts were settled with handshakes and phone calls without even a written agreement." Having practiced in a similar city in the same era, I had similar experiences and regret, as Linowitz, the absence of trust and the pursuit of the dollar that are the profession's most conspicuous characteristics today. But to tell the truth, even back then, most of the work was dull and, if not downright unworthy, of little or no positive social value. . . .

The embarrassing profiteering of the Martin Luther King family has been in the news recently. But did you know that two years ago, the King estate sued *USA Today* for printing the "I Have a Dream" speech on King's birthday, and made the paper pay a $1,700 license fee plus attorneys fees? . . .

"499" has become a verb. Guess what it means. A new form of sexual depravity? No. A section of the internal revenue code? Closer. It's what Congressmen do to deal with the limit of 500 on the number of pieces that can be sent at any one time as a free franked mailing in the 60 days before an election. Representative Harris Fawell, for example, managed, according to *Congressional Quarterly*'s Karen Forestel, to send out seven mailings in the 60 day period that just happened to range from 454 to 470 pieces. Representative George Miller also managed to get out seven urgent mailings, one of which hit the magic 499 right on the nose. . . .

We argue elsewhere in this issue that a blanket anti-regulation attitude is stupid because some regulation is clearly needed and that the real task is to sort out the good from the bad rules and make sure that the good ones are effectively enforced. A similar point can be made about the role of the government in general. The currently fashionable "anti" attitude is expressed by freshman Republican congressman Jon Christensen, who says "I don't believe government has the answer to people's problems."

Obviously, this is another stupid generalization, but it is repeated so often these days that we need to reply repeatedly with a list of areas from national defense to uncontaminated food to airplane safety where even the most rigid right-wingers will have to concede that government is either the only answer or has a significant role to play.

If, as I now suspect is the case, even the most rigid liberal is willing to concede that there are probably some areas where government is not the answer and where it is not doing its job well, then the next step for reasonable conservatives and liberals becomes identifying precisely which agencies can be abolished or have at least part of their mission eliminated. And of the programs that need to be kept, which must be made more effective and what are the specific improvements they require. Here we run into, in marked contrast to the generous supply of anti-government hot air, a severe shortage of hard information.

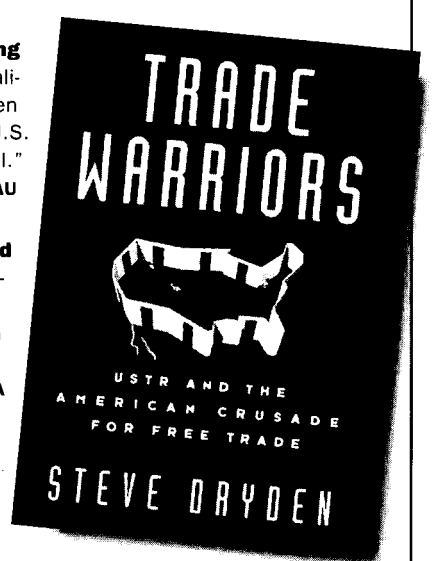
Al Gore says his National Performance Review will now "examine the basic mission of government, looking at government programs to find and eliminate things that don't need to be done." One wonders why Gore's group has not delved into this matter

"Extraordinarily thorough, lively and informative.... Of interest to everyone who cares about American trade policy, from scholars and journalists to the embattled officials dedicated to making that policy work. What's more, it is a good read!"
—I.M. DESTLER

"Offers fresh and fascinating insight into both the personalities and the politics of the men and women who have made U.S. trade policy since World War II."
—HENRY NAU

"Elegant, richly detailed and perceptive.... Required reading for anyone interested in the saga of postwar American commercial policy."
—PIETRO S. NIVOLA

$30.00, 452 pp.



At better bookstores.
To charge, 1-800-451-7556
(M-F, 9-5 EST)

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

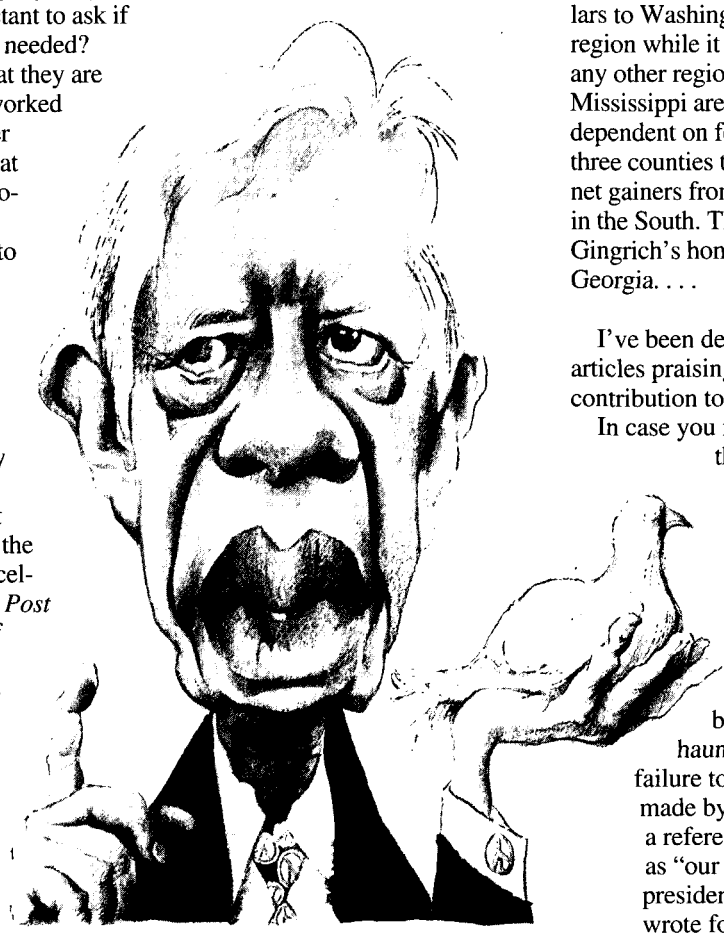
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

before. The problem is that almost no one has. The agencies that should have been asking these questions all along, OMB and GAO, have done so infrequently. The media have been similarly incurious.

Why are OMB's bright young policy analysts so reluctant to ask if what an agency does is needed? The answer is partly that they are understaffed and overworked with day-to-day number crunching and partly that most of them have a pro-government bias that makes them unwilling to question such basic assumptions. The General Accounting Office is the other agency whose job should entail overall evaluation of an agency but it rarely does so, as its 1994 Annual Report confirms. Neither does the press. An otherwise excellent recent *Washington Post* article on the subject of government reform by David Osborne, the co-author of *Reinventing Government*, did not evaluate major agencies. The only article that has come close to doing this recently is Tim Noah's in the *Wall Street Journal*, "So What Do People At Energy Department Do All Day Long?" What he found suggests that a lot of time is being wasted.

"We probably spend half our time doing very routine, almost administrative things like answering mail," one mid-level official explained to Noah, adding that much of his time is spent attending meetings "on programs over which we have broad oversight, but not a lot of responsibility." Total Quality Management is being instituted with concepts such as the "Time Management Matrix," the "Circle of Influence," and the "Circle of Concern," and featuring such innovations as newsletters posted inside bathroom stalls.

"In addition to its Washington Total Quality Management Team," writes Noah, "the agency has two dozen 'field quality coordinators' at its offices and labs across the country. How do they spend their time? Betty Crawford, of the Las Vegas office, says on a typical day she will 'review any plans that we might be working on with regard to quality. That might include a customer focus plan. It might include plans to get our strategic planning going. It might include plans or obligations I have to the quality council.'"



Roman Genn

Ah, the excitement and challenge of planning to get our strategic planning going! . . .

In a recent article about the government-hating South, *Newsweek*'s Jon Meacham points out the ironic fact that the South sends fewer dollars to Washington than any other region while it gets more back than any other region. Alabama and Mississippi are the states most dependent on federal dollars. The three counties that are the largest net gainers from Washington are all in the South. They include Newt Gingrich's home, Cobb County, Georgia. . . .

I've been delighted by the recent articles praising Jimmy Carter's contribution to our foreign policy. In case you missed them, two of the best were Charles William Maynes' in the *Los Angeles Times* and Jim Wooten's in *The New York Times Magazine*. I was particularly comforted by the latter because I've been haunted by guilt over my failure to fight a cut that was made by one of its editors of a reference I made to Carter as "our greatest living ex-president" in an article I wrote for the magazine a couple of years ago. The cut was reasonable in terms of the *Times*' space constraints but it left me being unfair to Carter about whom the remaining remarks in the article were critical.

A January headline in *The Washington Post* dramatizes Carter's contribution. It read "U.S. Considered Attacks on North Korea, Perry Tells Panel." In other words, we were in danger of going to war until Carter saved us.

On the other hand, what drove us

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

all crazy about Carter is beautifully captured by one of the lines in his new book *Always a Reckoning and Other Poems*. A poem entitled, "Some Things I Love" lists as one of those things "my in-basket empty." This was a man who saw himself as the good manager who could handle whatever came into his in-box, not as someone who is, as leader of his country, supposed to tell himself and us what should be in our national in-box. . . .

Bill and Hillary Clinton remind me of Carter in their ability to inspire my admiration one moment and drive me around the bend the next. I suppose it is their smug yuppieism that has given me the greatest problem. I'll try to explain in the following items. . . .

During his time at Oxford, Bill Clinton complained, "my friends don't understand my need to serve," according to David Maraniss's new book *First in His Class*. And while he was at Georgetown, he wrote a paper proposing that young men should be able to seek "alternative service in the Peace Corps or VISTA, rather than fight in wars they did not believe in." Maraniss notes that at that time there was no such choice for Clinton "if the draft board called his name." But why, after Oxford, when it was clear he was not going to be drafted, didn't Clinton's desire to serve prompt him to postpone going to law school so that he could volunteer for a couple of years in VISTA or the Peace Corps?. . .

Betsey Wright has objected to the words "public money" in the David Maraniss story, cited by Susan Threadgill in our last issue, about the swimming pool Hillary Clinton wanted to build on the grounds of the Arkansas governor's mansion when she and her husband lived there. Maraniss has made the appropriate correction in his book—that the money was to come from private sources, and we are happy to make it here. However, it has nothing to do with the point we were making in telling the story. What troubled us was the First Lady's statement when advisors told her they did not think the pool was a good idea: "Why can't we lead the lives of normal people?" which did not recognize that there are a lot of normal people who cannot afford to build swimming pools.

This was of a piece with Mrs. Clinton's infamous "Was I supposed to stay home and bake cookies?" line which seemed to assume that (1) practicing law was superior to homemaking, and (2) that spouses who choose to stay at home with their children do so because they prefer to bake cookies. Then there was the line that was most infuriating to me, "How can you practice law without representing banks?" to which the obvious answer remains, "If you are honorable enough not to take advantage of your husband's position to get a bank as a client."

Needless to say, there *are* lawyers who choose not to represent the financially powerful. There are also other lawyers who would love to represent banks, but who can't because they're not members of big-time firms like Hillary's. The woman has an unempathetic arrogance that, to put it gently, is not engaging. . . .

I think all of us were heartened by the performance of the U.S. military in the Gulf War. It was such a dramatic improvement over Grenada and Desert One. Unfortunately, echoes of those tragic farces linger. In her book, *On the Edge*, Elizabeth Drew describes the Delta Forces in Somalia.

"These troops had no sooner landed in Somalia than they swung into action. On the first day, they attacked a residence that housed UN officials. . . . then they shot up a house and captured a former police chief, who they insisted was Aideed. When he said he wasn't, they hit him with rifle butts and arrested him.". . .

I'm indebted to Russell Baker for pointing out this irony: The Federal Reserve Board insists that high employment rates pose such a dangerous threat of inflation that they require the Fed to raise interest rates, while at the same time welfare reformers insist that millions of people leave the welfare rolls and get jobs. If employment is already too high, why are we putting more people to work? Of course, I don't believe employment is too high, but there are a lot of people who believe in both Alan Greenspan and welfare reform. I hope they will ponder this inconsistency. . . .

Speaking of Greenspan, he recently spoke of the "very torrid rate" of economic growth in 1994. Yet consumer prices rose only 2.7 percent during the year, which by the way, was the fourth straight year that inflation has been held in the three percent area. The economic factor that Greenspan ignores is the role of global competition in holding down American prices and wages and preventing the inflation he fears.

If inflation does appear, there are other ways of dealing with it than monetary policy. One which I pray someone is doing is making sure our strategic petroleum reserve is in good shape, since it was an actual or perceived shortage of oil that caused the worst episodes of inflation in the last 40 years.

Another is to have stand-by authority for wage and price controls, which can be a very effective short-term weapon to halt infla-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion's momentum. The World War II Office of Price Administration was remarkably effective in containing inflationary pressures from the time FDR issued his hold-the-line order in April 1943 to the Spring of 1946. The Consumer Price Index rose only 4.3 percent, writes Howard Schaffer in his excellent recent biography of Chester Bowles. Without effective controls during World War I, the cost of living had increased by 108 percent. The OPA's record, it should be noted, was made with the highest employment in the nation's history. . . .

Another interesting inconsistency in the positions of many conservatives who want to force welfare mothers to work is that they also believe that mothers should stay at home with their children because they think children's emotional and intellectual development is enhanced by the full-time presence of a loving adult. So, Phyllis Schlafly, why should middle and upper class mothers stay at home, but not poor mothers?

"The quality of most day care centers," reports an Associated Press account of a study of day care facilities in California, Colorado, Connecticut, and North Carolina, "is so poor that it interferes with the emotional and intellectual development of young children." Doesn't this mean that society should, instead of pressuring both parents to work and entrusting their children to day care, encourage at least one parent to stay at home? I suspect this is one case where neither the conservatives nor the yuppies want to face the facts. . . .

Did you know the pledge of allegiance is no longer recited daily in many of our schools? Wait till Rush finds out!

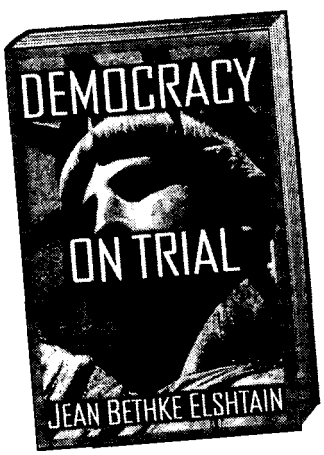
Actually, this is one issue on which I would be more with Rush than against. Those magnificent words "with liberty and justice for all" were not written by Thomas Jefferson or any of the founding fathers. They came from the pen of Francis J. Bellamy, who created the pledge in 1892. For me at least, they captured the promise of this country better than anything else I know. . . .

You must read the "letters" columns. Otherwise you are in danger of missing gems as pure as this one from Philip Losco to *The Washington Post*:

"Why is it that two unarmed, regular American heroes can tackle and disarm a man with an assault rifle, but a flock of pistol wielding park police can not disarm a man with a knife?". . .

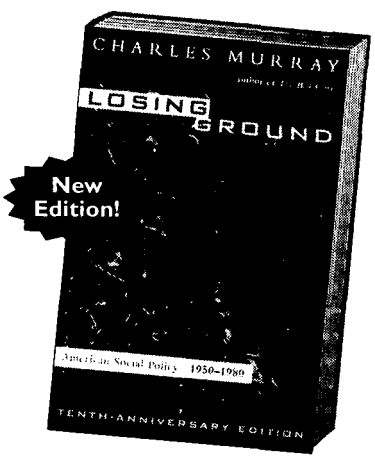
—*Charles Peters*

NEW FROM BASIC



"Wise, humane and profoundly reflective."—John Gray, front page, *New York Times Book Review*

"Offers a fascinating perspective on both the conservative and liberal roots of American populism."
—Senator Paul Wellstone, D-Minn.



The classic book that serves as a starting point for any serious discussion of welfare reform —now in a 10th anniversary edition.

BasicBooks
A Division of HarperCollins*Publishers*

At bookstores or call toll-free 800-331-3761
Also available from HarperCollins*Canada Ltd*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Stories the Media Miss

The Big Four newspapers neglect important news that affect you directly

BY MORTON MINTZ

Many say they couldn't take another of the endless, lurid dispatches from Tonya Harding's skating rink, or the daily rehashes of John Bobbitt's involuntary loss of a body part. Others say they hate newspapers because they're too negative, tearing down reputations and exploiting victims to make an easy buck. Or the press just doesn't get it right because it's in the bag for somebody—its sources, liberals, whoever.

But as a long-time Washington reporter, I've learned that the great problem of newspaperdom's Gang of Four—*The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*—isn't just that they devote too much space to tales of sex, mayhem, and other junk food. Their sin, rather, is omission: the non-reporting, burial, and trivialization of the news that citizens need—and to which they are damn well entitled.

The papers have a sharp eye for stories with zero effect on the lives of ordinary people, stories that sprawl across acres of newsprint and distract reporters from work that's less glitzy and more relevant. The Big Four, for example, almost completely missed the Savings and Loan mess—labeled the "biggest white-collar swindle in history" by then-Attorney General Dick Thornburgh. And they did a miserable job informing Americans about how a single-payer health plan not only works well in Canada, but would have saved our country hundreds of billions of dollars. Indeed, it's an everyday matter for the press to fail to provide sufficient information about government's successes and failures. Yet this information is crucial to the health of our democracy, and unlike infotainment about Tonya Harding and John Bobbitt, it profoundly affects the average person.

With tax time almost upon us, you may be interested in one example, brought to you by none of the Big Four. In a disturbing report last June 15, the General Accounting Office found that the Internal Revenue Service had a "lack of fundamental record keeping . . . inconsistent with record

Morton Mintz was a Washington Post *reporter for nearly 30 years and is a former chair of the Fund for Investigative Journalism.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

keeping requirements placed on taxpayers in supporting their returns."

Take two taxpayers who together owed the government $134,000 that the IRS didn't collect while they were getting the multi-million-dollar refunds to which they were entitled. Without first collecting the $96,000 that one owed, the GAO report declared, the IRS sent him a check for $13.4 million. The second taxpayer was even luckier. Before he could pay his $34,000, the IRS cut him a check for $21.8 million. And the GAO found systematic problems in all the accounts—$5.5 billion worth—on which the IRS does its calculations manually. One taxpayer received a refund of $1,065,303. Later he also received an automated refund, calculated at only $465,995. Had he not returned the second check that money might well have been lost to the government.

In a sampling of 45 manually calculated returns, the IRS "improperly and inconsistently" overcharged or undercharged the interest owed in 16—more than one in three. IRS records showed $58 billion in credits as of Sept. 30, 1993, although its 1993 fiscal year financial statements listed only $39 billion in credits—a discrepancy of $19 billion.

Another GAO report released the same day found similar deficiencies in the financial management of the other principal revenue-collecting agency, the Customs Service. "Customs didn't exercise adequate accountability and stewardship over tons of illegal drugs and millions of dollars of cash and property seized or used in its enforcement efforts," the GAO said. In three out of eight of the undercover operations the GAO audited, "some amounts of drugs or currency were not reliably accounted for." The GAO sent copies of both reports to all major news organizations. But the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal* and *Los Angeles Times* printed not a word.

Indefensible reporting

The IRS and Customs Services, unfortunately, are hardly the only government agencies that escape the papers' watchful eyes. In 1992 the Navy sought $17 billion over 12 years to build 350 more D-5 nuclear missiles for its submarine fleet and for flight testing. The principle rationale was that D-5s are more accurate than the C-4s they would replace. More accurate by how much? A mere 150 meters—about the distance between the chairs of the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate. For a weapon that is 7.4 times as destructive as the bomb that leveled Hiroshima, what's a few hundred feet here or there? And is the difference really worth $17 billion?

The Navy had an informed, resolute foe in Senator Dale Bumpers, an Arkansas Democrat. Year after year on the Senate floor, he has launched thoroughly-researched, lonely and doomed appeals for cutbacks in Pentagon follies. In 1992, for example, Bumpers sponsored an amendment that would have saved at least $12 billion of the $17 billion the Navy requested. Having "thousands of warheads and hundreds of missiles that we cannot use [is] the most incredible thing I have ever seen," Bumpers told the Senate.

But the efforts to restrain the Navy were easily defeated, mostly by the usual suspects: the professed fiscal conservatives. "I have enough sense," Bumpers went on to admit, "to know that nobody is paying much attention to this debate."

Nobody outside the government could pay much attention—unless they chanced to catch his powerful oratory on C-Span, as I did—because the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal* and *Los Angeles Times* paid no serious attention whatever. Not in 1992, not in 1993, not in 1994.

Experts who follow the work of Pentagon reporters for the Big Four say it's been years since they've done solid investigative reporting on wasteful weapons procurement, or since these papers have even published a full, prominent report on such an investigation done by someone else. It is easier, of course, for the papers to report the political back-and-forth over defense spending. And it's tough work to go out and discover first-hand how well a weapon system is actually working, and whether the contractors are using subtle financial machinations to bilk the taxpayers. But that is just what the Big Four ought to be doing all the time.

Last June 22, Senator Charles Grassley (R-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Iowa) tried to block a direct payment of $348 million to McDonnell Douglas Corp. to settle its claims on a *fixed-price* contract for C-17 transports. He pointed out that the settlement would downgrade critical range and payload specs for the fourth time while including $234.5 million for a claim which was later found by the Air Force's contracting officer to be groundless. He also cited an unusually caustic GAO report— "Military Airlift: C-17 Settlement Is Not a Good Deal"—that bluntly challenged the legitimacy of McDonnell's claims.

Who cared? Not the *Post*, *Times*, or *Journal*. And not the *Los Angeles Times*, even though McDonnell assembles the C-17s in nearby Long Beach, Calif.

As a potential budget-buster, the ongoing F-22 "stealth" fighter program is hard to beat. The Air Force wants at least $70 billion for F-22s—$162 million a piece. Do we need them? Not according to the GAO. It said that the Air Force could upgrade its F-15s at relatively small cost to meet any foreseeable realistic threat through the year 2014. Last year, reporter Steve Kroft had a cynically revealing conversation with senior Lockheed Corp. executive James Blackwell. The F-22 program 'would employ 100,000 workers in 44 states, as in 88 senators,' Kroft said. 'We want the senator or congressman in that district to know that he is a part of the F-22 team," Blackwell responded. Kroft works for "60 Minutes." The Big Four papers have done no remotely comparable reporting on the F-22. When *The Post* ran a story on the GAO report, it did so months after *Defense Week* did.

Given the immensity of Department of Defense budgets—currently $252 billion—it's amazing how little the press digs for stories of the inevitable waste, fraud and abuse. With money so tight for social needs, hard-nosed investigative reports on the Pentagon are even more essential than in the 1980s, when they were briefly fashionable. Yet by neglecting such investigations, the press—starting with the Big Four—makes it a cinch for politicians to divert public concern to the relatively piddling outlays for the National Endowment for the Arts, public broadcasting, and the like.

Conventional wisdom has ruled the day on other great issues as well. While the Big Four ran countless pro-GATT columns and editorials, the reporting was mostly a melange of dreary day-to-day process developments, recycled official policy statements, and pro-GATT arguments made by multinational corporations and their bipartisan allies in the White House and Congress. (Allies, by the way, in whom they invest huge amounts of money.) This was decidedly not the kind of substantive reporting that presents pros and cons fairly and fully.

GATT will profoundly affect tens of millions of Americans; untold numbers will see their jobs exported, even if others will benefit. GATT empowers the proposed World Trade Organization in Geneva to decide, in secret tribunals, that numerous federal and state laws regulating consumer, environmental and workplace safety are illegal. In the WTO any two countries—even two rotten little dictatorships—could outvote the United States, should they want to. Yet none of this ever really sunk in with the public—primarily because of major nonfeasance by the mainstream press.

Last October and November, Senate Committee Chairman Ernest Hollings (D-S.C.) held seven days of hearings on GATT. At one, two leading law professors, Laurence Tribe of Harvard and Bruce Ackerman of Yale disputed a major constitutional issue: whether GATT was a treaty, and not a mere trade agreement requiring a majority vote in both houses. And Sir James Goldsmith, a famed conglomerateur cum European Parliamentarian, had a grim warning for Western countries, including the United States: GATT would further encourage corporations to build manufacturing plants in low-wage Third World nations, boosting profits for themselves while inflicting unemployment, misery, and instability in the West."

The seven days of hearings got gavel-to-gavel coverage on C-SPAN, some substantive coverage in *The Washington Times*, but no real coverage whatsoever in the *Journal*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, or the *Post*. This was at a time when Congress was recessed, and there was almost no other news to report from Capitol Hill.

Before Congress voted on GATT many other important events went uncovered in the news columns of the Big Four. Take two extraordi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nary letters sent to President Clinton. In one, the attorneys general of 30 states protested incursions on their sovereignty that the secret WTO tribunals would make. In the other, leaders of 51 news and media organizations denounced the secrecy and inaccessiblilty of WTO deliberations as "an affront to the democratic traditions of this nation." Here, obviously, the Big Four were not above slighting their brethren.

Not until *after* Congress approved GATT did any of the Big Four—the Wall Street Journal, in particular—publish reasonably informative, balanced stories. Thus they left most readers with almost no idea what GATT will actually do, and how it will affect their lives. They were put to shame by the Boston Globe, which carried several outstanding stories on GATT by Mitch Zuckoff in the months before Congress voted—when it mattered.

The Big Four's cavalier attitude can even affect presidential elections. In his first days as president in January 1981, Ronald Reagan created the Task Force on Regulatory Relief, choosing Vice President George Bush as its leader. Bush often boasted of its accomplishments. Yet none of the big four papers took a close, comprehensive look at what it actually was doing, or, when Bush ran for president seven years later, at what he had done.

Now look what the big papers didn't do when someone else did a definitive and damning study.

Public Citizen, Inc., founded by Ralph Nader, laid out its findings in a 52-page report and released it at a Capitol Hill news conference on October 1988, a few weeks before the election. The Bush-led Task Force has "undermined a system of health and safety standards that has taken America over 80 years to achieve," Public Citizen concluded.

In a summary press release, it found the documented record "brutal, indeed." For example, "[a]t least 40,000 deaths and one million injuries can be traced to the Administration's delay in requiring air bags and automatic safety belts in cars. Hundreds of thousands of infants were fed nutritionally deficient formula while Bush and the OMB [Office of Management and Budget] delayed rules requiring testing of infant formula, and thousands of babies and young children suffered the serious and often fatal Reye's Syndrome disease while the Administration stonewalled rules to place warning labels on aspirin products linked to Reye's Syndrome in children."

The press conference sign-up sheets lack the signature of a single reporter from *The New York Times, The Washington Post*, or *The Wall Street Journal*. Their news columns carried not a word. To what should have been their acute embarrassment, the *Los Angeles Times* alone carried the story.

Finally, several weeks after Bush won the 1988 election, the *Chicago Tribune* finished an extensive investigation of its own. Its conclusion: "President Reagan's emphasis on deregulation has left millions of workers vulnerable to death and serious injury in the workplace. As Vice President, Bush has been a chief architect of that drive." This assault on the regulatory apparatus intended to protect human life somehow didn't qualify as news fit to print in *The New York Times, The Washington Post*, or *The Wall Street Journal*.

I'm not just making a *pro forma* bow to the Big Four when I say that they regularly do essential, even superb reporting on all sorts of issues that matter. Any fair-minded reader knows this. Rather, I'm making a point that I could pound home with dozens upon dozens of additional examples, were space available: These big papers get by with too many inexcusable omissions of great consequence.

The Big Four's blind eye on the work of government does more than leave the public ignorant. Without solid reporting on the government's work, bad policies are slow to be eliminated and the good ones are not emulated. Those who suffer under the old practices continue to, and everybody's money is wasted.

It's self-evident that whenever the Big Four turn a blind eye to misgovernance—by large corporations and other sources of power as well as by government—they leave the public ignorant and disarmed. But they also let bad policies and bad practices fester, put health, safety, and lives at risk, erode public trust, and squander everyone's money. This may be self-evident, too, but it's all the incentive the papers should need to do better. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

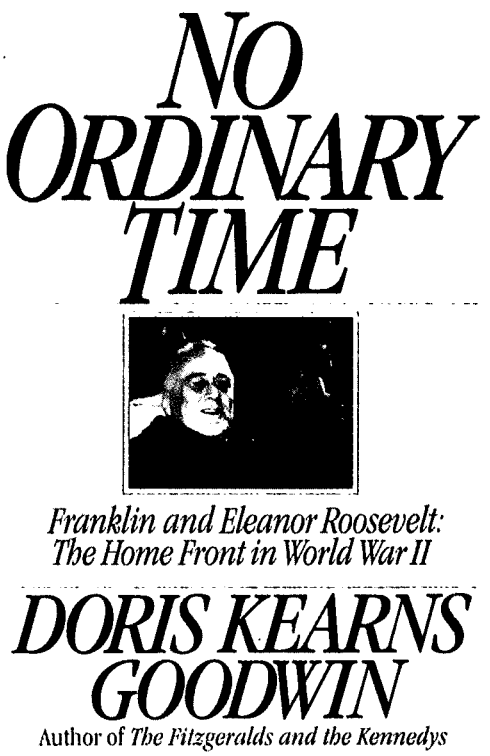
The 1994 Political Book Award

No Ordinary Time
Doris Kearns Goodwin

The editors of this magazine make no secret of their fondness for Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Few leaders since have led as effectively for the benefit of all. But Doris Kearns Goodwin's biography of the president and First Lady offers more than a dry reconstruction of what she calls their "undreamed-of achievements." With spare and elegant prose, *No Ordinary Time* vividly recreates a national mood that is now all but forgotten. With intimate details of the Roosevelts' daily lives, Goodwin reveals how these two extraordinary personalities turned their personal convictions into powerful forces in American life.

Goodwin also reminds us, though, that the New Deal was not pre-ordained: The politics were messy; FDR ducked many fights and compromised on many others. The value of Eleanor, we learn, is not just that she and her husband were political partners, but that she never ceased pushing him to do what was right rather than what was politically expedient.

But most important, the book captures the optimism and generosity with which the country faced the most daunting problems of the century. In an age of cynicism and self-pity, *No Ordinary Time* reminds us of the sacrifice and inspiration this country and its president are capable of.



Runners-Up

The Massacre at El Mozote
Mark Danner

On the Edge
Elizabeth Drew

Speak Now Against the Day
John Egerton

Looking at the Sun
James Fallows

Walter Winchell
Neal Gabler

Demosclerosis
Jonathan Rauch

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Police Protection in D.C.: Separate and Unequal

Washington's best cops patrol the city's safest neighborhoods

BY NANCY BEILES AND MICHAEL K. MAYO

Every once in a while, from the window of Sgt. Brian Hubbard's police cruiser, you can catch a glimpse of the Capitol dome. Only a mile away, proudly lit, the immaculate marble looks like it's meant to—a monument to justice and power. But Hubbard has other things on his mind. He spots a group of young blacks sitting on milk crates and a pile of dirt in an abandoned lot, and he pulls up to tell them to move on. Near a cemetery, he interrupts a woman leaning into a gray, beat-up car and tells her to move on, too; he thinks she's a prostitute, he says, but there's no way he can be sure. And later, in the vacant lot at Montello Avenue and Queen Street, he tells yet another group to leave. "We're not supposed to do something like that," he says. "But they're gonna move along while I'm on duty." Asked why, he points to the scene beyond his windshield: run-down row houses, empty lots, liquor stores—not a lot of places for young people to go. Whether it's legal or not, Hubbard acts on the grim reality that most shootings occur when people are just hanging out.

Hubbard is the evening supervisor for Washington's Fifth District. He's a genial guy, a little edgy but clearly enjoying his work. But when he gets to thinking about the 85 homicides and 11,007 crimes on his beat last year, he can't help but get frustrated. "This is a jungle," he says. "The stats that we have here are worse than Vietnam per square mile. We go to war when we go to work."

That work is made even harder with his department's slim resources. There are fewer than 300 officers in the Fifth District. And fewer than 20 are on the streets at any one time—not enough to catch criminals, let alone deter them. Ninety percent of the budget goes to personnel expenses, such as pensions and salaries, leaving only $25 million to pay for everything from weapons and cruisers to heat and electricity. With little cash to invest in new technology, Metropolitan Police Department officers spend dozens of hours each week filling out reports by hand (hours they could spend policing the city) because the department's

Nancy Beiles and Michael K. Mayo are Washington writers.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

plan to computerize the process still hasn't been funded.

In such meager and dangerous circumstances, crime fighting can get grim. Police have almost given up preventing crime, and spend much of their time shepherding people off their own streets before they turn into victims. At one point on his patrol, Hubbard and his four-man Viper Unit descend on four boys, no older than fourteen, standing on a quiet corner at about eight in the evening. The kids, with their baggy jeans, workboots, and air of nonchalance are used to having policemen shine flashlights into their eyes and grill them with questions. After a night on patrol with Hubbard, waiting for gunshots and hunting for bodies in alleys, you realize the danger these kids are in. One of the officers tells the kids, who he knows won't listen, to get home and get inside: "This is gonna be your death, sho' nuff."

About 30 blocks across town, in the elegant neighborhoods that line Rock Creek Park, police have a problem of a different sort: boredom. The 300 officers in the Uniformed Division of the U.S. Secret Service cover every inch of the serene, tree-lined streets that are home to foreign embassies and to private residents rich enough to afford the company. With only one homicide for every 29 in the Fifth District, and few diplomatic crises more serious than a fender bender, these officers are little more than window dressing. If there is a bomb threat, political demonstration, or motorcade, the Secret Service calls in the Metropolitan Police Department to do the dirty work.

With so many forces in the city, it's often difficult to know where one jurisdiction starts and the next ends. That's why it took two civilians to stop Francisco Duran firing on the White House late last year—the Secret Service were patrolling the grounds, the Park Police the sidewalk, and the MPD the street. Before the different officers could figure out who had jurisdiction, two civilians had disarmed Duran and wrestled him to the ground.

Only in Washington could something so illogical be such an accepted fact of life. The Uniformed Division of the Secret Service are immeasurably better trained and better equipped than their counterparts in the MPD. When it comes to violent crime and homicides, Washington has few rivals, yet there are nearly 6,000 federal police officers keeping watch over the city's safest neighborhoods. There are 20 individual federal forces—including ones for the National Zoo, the U.S. Postal Service, the Library of Congress, and the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. Washington, if it wanted, could literally put a cop on every corner. But as it stands, the safest streets in the city receive double or triple protection. The meanest streets get much, much less.

The reason for this blatant inequity comes from Washington's peculiar status as a federal city. In theory, the federal government—which occupies 41.4 percent of the city's land—compensates the District for lost tax revenue with a $660 million annual subsidy. But with the city's recent fiscal crisis—and with the eruption of violence associated with the drug trade—the chasm between the federal parts of the city and the rest of the District has grown ever larger.

Because Washington is saddled with burdens usually imposed on the states—such as welfare, Medicaid, and prisons—city leaders have argued that they ought to be allowed to summon the National Guard to help solve what is essentially a state emergency. The pleas carried on for six years until 1993, when a series of gang-related shootings—and the death of a 4-year-old girl—shook the city into action. When then-Mayor Sharon Pratt Kelly asked President Clinton for the authority to call in the National Guard, Clinton declined, but he did instruct the Justice Department to find ways to share more federal resources with the city.

The Hand that Giveth

The experiment that resulted provides a blueprint for bureaucratic success—and a cautionary tale of how politically dangerous that success can be. Eric Holder, U.S. Attorney for Washington, summoned various federal agencies to develop an assistance plan. Agency wonks sat around a table, listened to the city's problems, and figured out what they could do to help. The Capitol Police expanded their ju-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

risdiction; the Joint Fugitive Task Force lent 29 officers; the Postal Police offered a surveillance van. All told, Holder collected 115 vehicles for the MPD's use.

But it was the Department of Interior's Park Police that offered the boldest plan of action. The Park Police patrol federally controlled land, like Lafayette Park across from the White House, and the museums and monuments on the National Mall—not the most violent spots in the city. In March of 1994, 36 Park officers were reassigned to Hubbard's district. The results were immediate. By October, when the experiment had ended, crime had dropped 16 percent. "There was definitely a difference from the time we started," says Park Officer Charlie Guddemi. "In February, crime was obvious and blatant, and the criminals had no fear. You'd drive by alleys and see people using drugs in the open." Citizens' groups saw the difference as well. "There was definitely a difference between the Park Police and the city cops," says Bloomingdale community leader Rick Sowell, highlighting the MPD's lack of authority in the city. "The kids knew that they [the Park Police] were more likely to stop them."

By the end of the experiment, the neighborhood's alleys were largely clear of open drug use, and the Park Police simply answered MPD calls, a sign that order was coming back to the streets. Residents started calling "the Parks," as they were known, before they called the MPD. Guddemi says he was even invited in for lemonade. And just as important for the feds, crime back in the national parks didn't go up one bit. Free to fight crime at its sources, these federal police were making all Washingtonians safer. "We felt like part of the community," says Lt. Robert J. Kass, who supervised the project for the Park Police. "And when we left, we felt like we were abandoning the citizens. Hopefully we'll get to do it again. It's the best thing I ever did in my career."

Despite the project's enthusiastic reception among the MPD, citizens and the Park Police, Congress quickly scuttled hopes that the eight-month pilot might become permanent. The bureaucrats who'd made the program a success had stepped on big toes in the process, and Congress wasn't about to let that slide.

To pay for the experiment, the Department of the Interior had shifted money from its construction fund through its "emergency law and order authority"—if the Department sees an emergency, it can reallocate money Congress had originally authorized for other programs. This construction fund, though, is a favorite source of pork barrel projects.

The senators in charge of appropriations for the Interior were not amused. From where they sat on the Hill, they didn't see any sort of emergency.

"I think it is a gross exaggeration to call this an 'emergency,'" the ranking Republican on the appropriations subcommittee, Don Nickels of Oklahoma, told Roger Kennedy, director of the National Park Service and a key player in the Park Police project. "Can you in any way, shape, or form explain how you would call the situation a new emergency? What differentiates the situation a few months ago from what it has been for the last couple of years?" It would have been an emergency, he said, only if there were "a situation where you have a mass demonstration of 400,000 people who might incite a riot. And then you would say, 'We have an emergency.'. . .There has been nothing unforeseen under normal conditions."

Robert Byrd (D-West Virginia), then the chairman of the subcommittee, was no more pleased. In the committee's annual Department of Interior budget meeting on May 11, 1994, before charging on to a full day of budget negotiations, Byrd opened the hearing by chastising Kennedy for the program. Byrd was upset that Interior hadn't responded to a letter he and Nickels had written in opposition to the money transfer. When Byrd asked, "Have you been properly dressed down?" Kennedy was forced to apologize. Byrd made it clear: "The hand that giveth can take away."

And take it did. As punishment for the the Park Service's efforts to aid the city, the subcommittee docked the $1 million from the department's budget intended to hire the most recent class of Park Police recruits. The money, not surprisingly, went to repay the lost construction funds.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In the meantime, Washington endures the "normal conditions" Nickels described back in May. With a deficit at $1 billion and massive cuts looming, the police will take some of the hardest hits. Already, the 1994 D.C. police budget of $227 million is down $23 million from four years before. But the federal forces patrolling the safest streets are likely to remain untouched. While Byrd and Nickels quibble about who has the authority to touch what money, the imbalance deepens. And don't count on the city's newspapers to expose the inequity—most journalists, like members of Congress, live beyond firing range of Washington's inner-city.

The most radical solution—and the most commonsensical one—would be to consolidate all the city's 10,000 officers into one force. If separate units are required to protect federal officials and diplomats—or the Treasury building or the Zoo—that's fine; but resources could be allocated sensibly. At the very least, the feds ought to stop draining resources from Washington and handle their own armed escorts and motorcades. Somewhere in between lies a sensible compromise. Perhaps each of the federal units could donate officers to a city-wide task force on violent crime.

Defenders of the federal-D.C. relationship contend that Washington has more than enough resources to provide necessary services, and that its wounds are self-inflicted. In fact, there is much to this argument; the police department, in particular, has been riddled with corruption. Many officers can't even testify in court because of their own shady behavior. Since 1990, when the MPD hired 1,471 officers, skimping on background checks and hiring standards, more than 200 cops have been arrested. Why the rush? Because Congress had threatened to withhold its entire annual payment to the city unless it quickly boosted its rolls. From then on, Washington was stuck with a batch of low-grade rookies.

But the ineffectiveness of the present MPD is no excuse for federal inaction. Anyone who sees these stark differences between upper-class and lower-class Washington will understand that adjusting the allocation of resources is not a political problem, but a moral imperative. □

Who's Who

Christine Todd Whitman, now considered the GOP's brightest vice-presidential prospect, has one little problem. Her husband John is said to talk too much to reporters, leaving her advisers constantly nervous about what he might say next. . . .

Is the White House dangling a Federal judgeship before **Eric Holder**, the U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia in the hope that he won't indict **Ira Magaziner** for lying about the activities of **Hillary Clinton**'s health reform task force? We hope this is just a nasty rumor. Magaziner may deserve to be indicted for incompetence, but not for lying. And Holder appears to be an excellent U.S. attorney, whose crime fighting skills are desperately needed right where he is. . . . .

As **Robert Reich** contemplates his future after he leaves the Department of Labor, it seems clear that he should not consider running for mayor of New Haven as one of his more promising career prospects. In **David Maraniss**'s new book, *First in His Class*, Reich is quoted as calling the city "the vile crotch of Connecticut.". . .

Phil Gramm had expected to get a seat on the powerful Senate Finance Committee when Congress reconvened in January. But his presidential rival, **Robert Dole**, is said to have kept him from getting it. . . .

Another sign of internal discord within the GOP came at a January session of "Meet the Press" during a break in which Senator **Pete Domenici** rebuked Rep. **John Kasich** for announcing tax cut plans that he had not previously discussed with Domenici. . . .

In mid-January, **Bill Clinton** invited two dozen intellectual leaders to Camp David to advise him on what to do—remember **Jimmy Carter** did the same thing when he was in trouble. Among those invited by Clinton were **Paul Starr**, **Alan Brinkley**, **David Osborne**, **Robert "Bowling Alone" Putnam**, **Os Guinness**, **Stephen "Culture of Disbelief" Carter**, **Alan Wolfe**, **Benjamin Barber**, and **Al From**. This group may not be capable of salvaging a presidency, but at least they do seem to be an improvement over **Anthony Robbins** and **Stephen Covey**, the "personal development" superstars Clinton was consulting a few weeks earlier. . . .

Last year, **Chip Kahn** was working for Health Insurers of America Association, lobbying against health reform for the gang that produced those Harry and Louise commercials. This year, he doesn't have to lobby to get his views across. He's the new chief of staff for the Health Subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee. . . .

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Harry and Louise at Ways and Means . . . Clinton's cover-up girl. . . Starr goes fishing. . . .

Speaking of lobbyists, one with especially close ties to **Bill** and **Hillary Clinton** is **Liz Robbins**, who has represented such clients as H.J. Heinz and New York City. According to the *Washington Post*'s **Lois Romano**, Robbins "helped plan and pay for Hillary Rodham Clinton's 47th-birthday party in October." And **Chelsea Clinton** has been a guest at Robbins's East Hampton home, as have presidential pal **Strobe Talbott** and such White House luminaries as **Laura D'Andrea Tyson**, **Marsha Hales**, and **Lisa Caputo**. Robbins got into the news recently when she was caught having her employees make contributions to Senator **Edward M. Kennedy** that she could not legally make herself. . . .

By mid-February, Washington insiders were confidently predicting that the 1996 Republican presidential ticket would be **Dole** and **Whitman**. But don't call your bookie just yet. Who's Who's most recent insider prediction was that **Dan Quayle** would be the favorite. Last month, he dropped out. . . .

My illusions about Harvard are in danger. Its **John F. Kennedy School of Government** has hired former Washington mayor **Sharon Pratt Kelly** to lead a study group on "Preparing American Cities for the 21st Century," which will presumably include the budgetary techniques that enabled her to produce a $100 million average annual deficit when she ran the government of the District of Columbia. . . .

When **Newt Gingrich** was running for Congress in 1974 and in 1978, according to Robert Scheer of the *Los Angeles Times*, his campaign emphasized that he was a family man. "Newt's family is like your family," was his '74 slogan. In '78, his ads attacked his opponent's willingness to leave her husband at home while she was in Washington and proclaimed, "When elected, Newt will keep his family together." Within 16 months he was suing for divorce. He has been quoted as explaining that his wife was not "young enough or pretty enough to be the wife of the President. And besides, she has cancer." I can't believe he really said that, but it does seem clear that Newt was, as Who's Who has recounted, a Deadbeat Dad until he was forced to pay alimony and child support by a court. It also turns out that Newt, the devoted family man, later made his first wife what seemed like a nice offer: an extra $350 a month in exchange for renouncing her right to any of his additional future income. After she agreed, he signed his $4 million book deal. . . .

In our December issue, this column predicted that **Warren Christopher**, who had seemed in daily danger of being dumped, would remain as Secretary of State. In January came such headlines as "Secretary of State Proves a Survivor" and "A Wallflower No More, Christopher is Courted." . . .

More bad news for **Bill Clinton**. According to a January story in the *Arkansas Times*, independent counsel **Kenneth Starr** is taking over 6,000 more square feet of office space in Little Rock on a lease that runs until May 1996. And in early February, according to the *Washington Times*, Starr added four new lawyers to his staff, bringing the total to twenty. Some observers here share the Clintons' fear that the investigation has turned into a fishing expedition far from its Whitewater mission. It's hard to see what election day payments to black ministers, a long tradition in Arkansas politics recently reported to be a subject of investigation by Starr, has to do with Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan or any other aspect of the alleged scandal that was supposed to be under inquiry. . . .

The FCC has changed the name of its Field Operations Bureau to the Compliance and Information Bureau. The reason, we are told, is that Commissioner **Rachel Chong** regarded the initials FOB to be a racial slur (Fresh Off the Boat) against Chinese immigrants. There are, of course, some Republicans who regard FOB as a slur for other reasons. . . .

We want to thank the Arkansas columnist and Clinton biographer, **John Brummett**, for coming to our defense. Recently recounting that **Betsey Wright**, the first family's cover-up girl, had called him to say, "You should know better than to believe anything in that crazy *Washington Monthly*," Brummett wrote, "Actually, it's one of my favorite periodicals—feisty, thoughtful, gossipy.". . .

Women on the White House Staff are indignant that when there was bad news to be dealt with, namely the Clinton budget, **Alice Rivlin** and **Laura Tyson** were trotted out to do the dirty work on the talk shows, when if the news had been good, **Robert Rubin** and **Leon Panetta** would have been there instead. . . .

—Susan Threadgill

Roman Genn

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Newt's Minions

You won't see them on C-Span, but staffers in Congress run the show. Here's the inside skinny on the new generation of Republicans

BY AMY WALDMAN

There is a new conventional wisdom on the state of power in the U.S. House of Representatives. All eyes follow Newton Leroy Gingrich, the honorable representative from Cobb County, Georgia, maker of revolutions, sealer of Contracts: Ladies and gentlemen, the new Speaker of the House.

But many of the real movers and shakers in the U.S. House of Representatives aren't even elected, much less famous.What regular readers of the *Monthly* well know, but most Americans do not, is that congressional staff, operating behind the scenes, have a profound impact on the nation's legislative branch. They write the speeches, draft the bills and amendments, stage-manage hearings, and, in a town where access is a hard currency, they decide who the congressmen will, and will not, see. "The place," says Congress guru Norman Ornstein of the American Enterprise Institute, "does not run without the staff." So I set out to see what makes the foot soldiers of the revolution tick.

You can usually see it even before they start to talk: an admixture of giddiness and passion. Giddiness, of course, because so many are so young, but also because, like corked champagne, the Republicans had been bottled up in the minority for so long. And passion, because so many of them are true believers: Government, I heard again and again, is the problem, not the solution. Loyalty to the cause—"earnestness," if you prefer—is essential, often more valued than experience. But, despite all the talk of revolution, I found, their passion leaves them vulnerable to moneyed interests that have more than the revolution on their minds.

On the Hill, staffers sometimes act more like members of Congress than do the ones who were elected. The idea for the national service and student loan programs, for example, was initiated by a staff member looking for a way his boss could make a mark. Another staffer then shepherded it through the House. A key provision of the bill—a single line that would have provided for IRS loan collection—was unilaterally deleted by the staff of the House Ways and Means Committee as part of a turf war. From conception to passage, argues Steven Waldman in *The Bill*, legislation is often controlled by people who the voters would not even recognize.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Perhaps the most telling anecdote of staff influence comes from Harrison Fox, who, over 20 years, steered four freshmen Republicans through their terms. "Here's Harrison Fox," said one of the congressmen, introducing his former chief of staff. "I worked for him for four-and-a-half years."

It takes, you see, more than one man—even if that man is Newt Gingrich—to make a revolution. God needs his angels, Satan his minions, and Newt—well, Newt needs his minions too.

Technocrats Shrugged

Nobody understands this better than Morton Blackwell. Blackwell—executive director of the Council for National Policy, a membership-only organization of 500 of the country's most important conservatives, and the man whose Madison County, Virginia cabin was used to draft the Contract With America—is certainly a conservative powerhouse. Yet it is telling that he still devotes large chunks of time to developing young conservatives through his suburban Washington D.C. Leadership Institute.

Robert Giuffra, chief counsel of the Senate Banking Committee, is a graduate of the Institute. Virginia Thomas, House Majority Leader Dick Armey's committee liaison and wife of Clarence, is one too. Kerry Knott, Armey's chief of staff, is another alumnus. And so are the more than 100 staff members and interns that Blackwell has placed in Hill offices just since the November election.

That sounds great to the nearly 200 young (and some not-so-young) job hunters who've trudged through a cold January morning to the Quality Hotel, just a few short blocks from the Capitol building, for the Institute's Congressional staff training workshop. This is Blackwell's third encore since election day. The would-be staffers pack into rows of hard-backed chairs, clutching courtesy copies of Frank Van der Linden's *The Real Reagan*. Brian Lopina, Jim Istook's administrative assistant, steps to the podium. "For those of you who are new in town," he begins, "welcome to the revolution."

But first, there is a short admissions test. Applicants to conservative employment banks, including Blackwell's, are required to say whether they "strongly agree" or "strongly disagree" with a number of statements:

"Liberals are more compassionate towards the plight of the poor."

"Homosexual activity should be incompatible with service in the U.S. military forces."

"It is bad policy ever to legislate morality."

Then all applicants must rate a variety of public figures and institutions: John Kenneth Galbraith? Rush Limbaugh? Phyllis Schlafly? OSHA?

The questionnaires are used to place conservatives with conservatives, and moderates with moderates, explains David Mason, who heads the Heritage Foundation's U.S. Congress Assessment Project. But also, says Blackwell employee Tod Steward: "You don't want someone who doesn't know what they believe." Those who don't know are given literature to bump them "off the fence" when they come to the Institute for a character interview.

In recent years, Democrats in the House have tended to be more technocratic than that. "On the Democratic side, being ideological was a handicap in operating effectively, even getting a job," says Rachel Gorlin, a former Democratic Appropriations staffer. "You weren't supposed to get too passionate, even on something you believed in."

The new Republican powers do not trust blank slates. Take the Joint Committee on Taxation, where the staff has historically written most major tax law for both houses and was one of the few nonpartisan sources of information and legislation in Congress. Even when the Republicans took the Senate in 1980, the committee's sitting chief of staff remained. "No one ever asked me what my beliefs were," says David Brockway, a former chief of staff. But Congressman Bill Archer (R-Texas), the new House chair, just fired the sitting chief of staff, a respected Hill veteran, and replaced him with Ken Kies, an ardent partisan—and one of Washington's most powerful tax lobbyists.

"Personnel is policy," is a central Blackwell tenet, and as a Blackwell graduate, Steve Sutton, chief of staff to Representative Frank Riggs, agrees.

The beliefs of the 38-year-old Sutton were shaped at sea, in the Navy, when he began reading Ayn Rand. Rand's extreme version of personal responsibility—all your problems are of your own creation—became his credo and he returned to land an absolute believer in free enterprise. Then he found Blackwell, and Blackwell led him

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to the Hill.

Blackwell says, "To lead, you have to read." Read, Sutton suggests, conservative William Rusher's *The Making of the New Majority Party*, and you'll see how the New Deal dichotomy of haves and have-nots has given way.

Now, explains Sutton, "union members have cars, second homes, and boats." They're not "haves," says Sutton, they're "producers," and it's "nonproducers"—welfare recipients, illegal immigrants, and in some cases lawyers—they resent.

We can all agree that there are some "non-producing" lawyers (to be kind), but, in the spirit of Ayn Rand, Sutton's logic can be taken further than he might like. What, for example, of the wealthy Wall Street trader that churns the market? And are the victims of large-scale economic changes always to blame for their problems? "I've hit a home run and you should be able to do the same," is a common Republican theme. But, as Jim Hightower once observed: a good many of them started on third base.

The beliefs of Jamie Moore, chief of staff for George Nethercutt, were shaped less by books than by personal experience. Another Blackwell graduate, the 27-year-old Moore traces his political roots to his childhood. As part of forced integration, he was bused across town each morning, from a "nice suburb" to an "inner city" school where he remembers wearing pressed pants among kids who wore old jeans, and saddle shoes among kids who sometimes wore no shoes at all. "I stuck out like a sore thumb," Moore says.

Witness to what he considered the crippling effects of federally funded low-income housing, and the subsequent rise of crime, his distaste for "liberal social engineering" grew. "You can't build a model patchwork mini-America," he says.

So when a junior high school project took him to the 1980 presidential campaigns, he responded to Reagan's anti-government rhetoric and became a conservative campaign junkie. He came to the Hill because, he says, "Outside you can only bring up ideas. Here you can make them happen."

Twenty-five-year-old Steve Tomlinson, another Institute graduate, never thought of coming to Washington either—not, that is, until the year of the Newt. A Carney, Nebraska native and now chief of staff for Rep. Jon Christensen, Tomlinson, like Moore, finds his political inspiration in the experiences of his childhood. Some of his earliest memories are of the government overreaching itself. Tomlinson's father was a self-employed janitor, and after spending days cleaning carpets to support a young family, Tomlinson recalls, his father was forced to spend his nights filling out EPA forms registering his chemical cleaners. Again, when he applied for a loan at the Small Business Administration, he faced excessive paperwork. With a bank, Tomlinson says, "he could just go in for an hour, lay out what he had, talk to someone, and know what he could get."

Eventually, Tomlinson says the economic stresses of supporting a family of four—exacerbated, he emphasizes, by the constant weight of regulation—precipitated his parents' divorce.

Tomlinson's anti-regulation lessons are drawn from emotional memories, and the Reagan-esque story of a janitor's struggle is indeed compelling. But the EPA doesn't make janitors fill out forms for the cleaners they use. The only reason Tomlinson's father could possibly have had to fill out forms would have been to register the disposal of hazardous waste, but most janitors generate such a small quantity of waste that they are exempt from even those regulations. However, if by some chance Tomlinson's father did generate enough waste to be regulated—more than 220 pounds per month—that regulation would consist of registering for an EPA identification number (one form, a couple of pages) and then filling out a short manifest on those infrequent occasions that a lone janitor would send waste off to disposal. It could hardly have been a nightly toil.

And one wonders what would have happened to Tomlinson's father had the government not stepped in to regulate the cleaners he used. In the seventies, after chemical workers started dying before their time, the government began discouraging chlorinated solvents like methylene chloride, then widely used in cleaning products.

Complaining that the SBA is not like a bank doesn't make much sense either. Tomlinson's father may have gotten friendly hearings from bankers, but as soon as they discovered he didn't have much collateral, they would have shown him the exit. That's one reason why the SBA was formed—because the government recognized that banks are not known for giving would-be entrepreneurs the money they need to get going without substantial collateral. And the SBA, let us not forget, also has a duty to protect the taxpayer mon-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ey it's giving out. So, for potentially risky borrowers, it makes perfect sense that a few questions might be in order. That's not bureaucracy gone mad; that's being careful with your tax dollars.

It's fine to be against government, or regulation, but if you're in a position to do something about it, you ought to know just what the problem is, and why. Instead, Tomlinson frames the debate this way: "Is government inherently good, or inherently bad?"

Matured by age, and tempered by experience, some of the older staff on the Hill do see shades of complexity. Take Alan Coffey, Jr., the chief of staff for the House Judiciary Committee. A 19-year veteran of the committee, at age 50 he is closer to the age of the young staffers' fathers.

A Republican staffer needs to know: Do they have a PAC? Will it give $500? $5,000?

He says seeing the War on Poverty from the inside, as a lowly civil servant in HUD during the Johnson Administration, was a formative political experience: "I saw a detachment on the part of the people running these programs that they knew better, they knew best," he says.

But while his beliefs may be unswerving, his approach is refreshingly pragmatic. Unlike the youth corps on the Hill, Coffey identifies legitimate failures of bureaucracy and liberal government, such as oversized punitive damage awards and retroactive liability laws, which can punish businesses that bear little or no responsibility for a problem.

"But," he adds, "I do not believe in an unregulated society; there is a role for government beyond national defense." He cites the Dalkon Shield and silicon breast implants as examples where regulation, and retroactive liability, ought to apply.

But men like Coffey are more the exception than the rule among Newt's new shock troops. Blackwell and his proteges are not so much interested in technical expertise as in what conservative policies to advance and how. His students debate mock scenarios about how to get a Star Wars type defense shield passed. But what they don't learn is that much of the work behind drafting legislation operates on a level of detail that belies the simple descriptions given on 60-second nightly news spots. One new sentence, even one new word, in an environmental protection bill for instance, could exempt a chemical company from properly packaging its product.

With committee staffs pared by a third, and with so many inexperienced staff members, staff on the Hill will be ever more dependent on outside sources of information, a situation that plays right into the hands of lobbyists.

These lobbyists often do their best work not as blank-check-bearing back-slappers, but as apparently valuable sources of information. Cultivating a staffer's trust and then subtly—or not so subtly—skewing the information one provides to favor one's clients is an art form. For those who can afford to hire these lobbyists, there are legions of staffers just waiting to be put through the spin machine.

Take Jamie Moore, George Nethercutt's chief of staff. Working on campaigns, he says he thought all lobbyists were evil moneybags. Now he's learned better. "Lobbyists are important sources of information about what's happening in our district," he says.

James Derderian, the Commerce Committee's new chief of staff, isn't worried about lobbyists, though. With reddish hair, a wide smile, a raucous laugh, and, at 31, the energy of an 18-year-old, he doesn't seem to worry much at all.

Derderian is the child of "barely white collar" parents, the grandchild of Armenian and Italian immigrants, and he cultivates an image as a friend of the little guy. He talks about how "cool" it will be to tell some man on the street that "his electric bill went down because of the guys I'm hanging with. . . . I get really juiced by that." (He doesn't specify which Republican policies will lower electric bills.)

Derderian is not a details man. He was picked because he has earned Thomas Bliley's absolute trust. And he has put a premium on loyalty too: One of his first acts was to ax the Republican staff on the oversight subcommittee to get a "fresh start" with outsiders.

He talks of small businesses being brutalized by government regulation. One small businessman, he recalls, was held liable for $17 million by Superfund—which happens to be up for reauthorization this year—"just for dumping a few batteries. Here's a man who's faced every challenge—soci-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

etal, community, family, hell, he's probably even a veteran," Derderian says, "and he's on the phone to me weeping that he didn't do anything wrong."

The Superfund example is compelling. Under its "joint and several liability" provisions, anyone connected to a dump site can indeed be held liable for the entire mess. They can also sue anyone else who could have played a role, and the result is more litigating than cleaning.

But a $17 million penalty for dumping a few batteries is certainly an exaggeration, and the problems with Superfund mean, quite simply, that Superfund needs to be reformed. They do not mean that businesses that pollute should not be held liable. Nor do they mean, as some who like to draw broad lessons would have us believe, that government regulation is the people's enemy.

When Derderian talks about business in America, he is genuinely passionate—even, for a usually laid back guy, excited: "They're creating jobs, paying taxes, and they're on the front lines of all the social issues: single parents, child care, divorce. They're a microcosm of community."

But his blind love for business obscures an honest appraisal of its shortcomings. Ask Derderian about the implications for workers of unregulated competition, and he says, "The workforce will become so valuable businesses will have to treat them better." Ask about rolling back safety standards, and Derderian says, "I cannot imagine a business succeeding that doesn't treat its employees like family. If not, they'll just walk; they'll go somewhere else." One wonders, in a shrinking job market, where they'll walk to.

His own grandparents had no place to walk during the Depression, but Derderian draws a different historical lesson. "They were mortified," he says, "that they had to take the make-work of the New Deal." But where was business then? Better that grandma and grandpa starve?

Long Live the Revolution

Ed Gillespie, grandson of an Irish coalminer and Dick Armey's press secretary, thinks a lot has changed since the New Deal. "The House Republicans," he declares, "are the most populist political party right now."

But for populists, they are surprisingly reluctant to discuss the impact of their proposals on the average working man. When I point out that their flat tax proposal will give a much larger cut to the rich, Gillespie simply blames the Treasury Department for distorting the debate. "I hope the Democrats keep stressing class warfare," he goes on, "because they fundamentally misunderstand the American people. The Democrats think every American who makes $40,000 a year resents the people making $140,000."

Gillespie is right about one thing: Americans are not, on the whole, an envious people. It is indeed foolish for liberal Democrats to think that relying on class envy will get them very far.

But that does not mean that it is wrong to examine how differently the rich and poor are affected by the government's policies. After almost 15 years of tax cuts aimed at society's wealthiest, it is not "class warfare" to point out that the flat tax would give them even more. Americans are not envious, but they are just: Those who profit most from society can—and should—do a little more to assure that it continues to function as well as it can.

A few blocks away, back at Blackwell's workshop, such fine points of the American character are not up for debate. As the eager neophytes loosen their ties, lobbyist Chris Gersten spends a mesmerizing hour detailing the Institute line on the staffer's primary role: Congressmen exist to get reelected, and staff exist to help them do it. They are less revolutionaries than collection agents.

"You don't meet the congressman for $1,000," Gersten says, the audience laughing. "The congressmen is going to meet people who can raise $10,000, or have networks of friends who are $1,000 givers."

So of those seeking access, the staff needs to know: "Do they have a PAC? Will it give $500? $5,000? Will they host a reception for 20 PACs?" Charities or public interest groups, he continues, are easy: If they don't give money, they don't get time. Unless, that is, they can provide useful information—or, even better, publicity—"Do they have a newsletter? Will they give the member an award?"

As his scenario of money-for-access unfolds, the room grows quiet and the atmosphere takes on an electric quality. "Fascinating," the woman next to me keeps whispering. "Fascinating." Gersten finishes, and the crowd erupts into applause. The exhilarated students gather their coats and leave the hotel. Next stop: the Hill. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Memo of the Month

CFO BULLETIN

OFFICE OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

NUMBER 20

NOVEMBER 17, 1993

ALL FEMA EMPLOYEES

Subject: AUTHORIZED RETURN HOME TRAVEL DURING EXTENDED TEMPORARY DUTY (TDY) ASSIGNMENT.

This CFO Bulletin is to clarify recent discrepancies regarding authorized return home travel for FEMA personnel on extended TDY assignment.

FEMA allows employees on extended TDY assignments to return home once every 30 to 45 days at government expense. Disaster Assistance Employees (DAE's) assisting in presidentially declared disasters may also be returned home once every 30 to 45 days.

With the approaching holidays, it has come to our attention that some employees would rather travel to alternate locations instead of returning home. Even though the alternate travel may produce a cost savings to the government, the Federal Travel Regulation does not allow FEMA the flexibility to reimburse travel expenses to alternate locations. Employees may only be authorized to return to his/her official duty station or place of abode.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Case for (Some) Regulation

By not distinguishing between good and bad regulations, the GOP could do more harm than good

BY JOSHUA WOLF SHENK

Jack Faris, president of the National Federation of Independent Business, has a simple message for the 104th Congress. "Our members want the federal government off their backs, out of their pockets, and off their land." Simple enough for you?

It is for Congressional Republicans. NFIB played a crucial role in beating back universal health coverage. Now the small business lobby—with 600,000 members—has a new target: federal regulations. They've asked for a freeze in all new rules, and they are likely to get it. The "Regulatory Transition Act of 1995," sponsored by Rep. Tom DeLay (R-Texas), would impose a six-month moratorium on federal regulations, retroactive to last election day.

But don't ask NFIB precisely what this will accomplish. Kim McKernan, the group's chief lobbyist for the House of Representatives, cannot even name a single regulation she'd like to see repealed. "That's what the moratorium is for," she says. "Stop the bleeding. Let's take a look at the landscape and re-evaluate."

Indeed, for opponents of regulation, vagueness is a powerful weapon. Polls show vigorous public support for federal controls on the environment, consumer safety, and food and drugs. Businesses, meanwhile, despise these regulations: They don't want to be told what to do, especially if it costs them money. "Regulatory reform" is the Republicans' magic bullet. Reducing excessive burdens on business, they argue, will create jobs and lower prices for consumer goods. Everyone, they say, ends up richer, safer, and healthier.

But there is no magic bullet. Real regulatory reform—making the process smarter and more efficient, paring out senseless rules and toughening others—would take hard work and political courage. The Republican agenda is old-fashioned laissez-faire capitalism in disguise. Rather than dismantle agencies and provoke a public outcry, they plan to hogtie the system with cumbersome new rules and restrictions. This is a boon to business owners and corporate managers; it's a disaster for the ordinary guy.

Take this moratorium. It's billed as an antidote to red tape, but the volume of paperwork, procedu-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ral rules, and sheer mayhem provoked by its implementation would be staggering. Civil servants would be stopped dead in their tracks—whether they explicate tax codes at the Treasury Department, review new medications at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), or enforce recalls at the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Federal regulators would spend weeks compiling lists of current, past, and future regulations. Millions of Americans who depend on the existing rules will be thrust into a vacuum.

Reagan's Blueprint

Congressional Republicans lifted their blueprint for this wave of deregulation straight from Ronald Reagan. Upon taking office in 1981, Reagan banned new rules for 30 days and issued an executive order forbidding agencies from issuing regulations—large or small—without explicit approval from the Office of Management and Budget. In theory, OMB would amend or reject rules where the costs outweighed the benefits. In practice, wherever possible, it blocked civil servants from enforcing the law.

For example, in the fall of 1981—ten years after Reye's Syndrome was first linked to use of aspirin—the Centers for Disease Control found in four independent studies that children with viral illnesses, such as chicken pox or flu, risked contracting Reye's if treated with aspirin. The FDA commissioned its own study, and concluded similarly. On June 4, 1982, Health and Human Services Secretary Richard Schweiker announced a FDA educational campaign and a requirement that warning labels on aspirin products "be changed to advise against their use in 'children with flu and chicken pox.'" As required, he submitted the rule to OMB's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA). OIRA sent the rule back for further study, objecting that the risk of fatalities had not been conclusively proven. In 1983 *The Wall Street Journal* revealed that OIRA took its cues from the Aspirin Foundation of America, which thought the label would hurt business.

With the FDA paralyzed, public interest groups took the matter to court, a regular event in Reagan's first term, and the administration drew a stern rebuke. "All scientific evidence in the record points to a link between [aspirin] and Reye's Syndrome," the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia wrote in 1984. "The pace of agency decision-making is unreasonably dilatory." The warning-label rule took effect in June 1986, but the four-year delay had taken its toll. The advocacy group Public Citizen estimates 3,000 children contracted Reye's Syndrome in that time, a third of whom died; many of the surviving children suffered permanent brain damage.

Disabling the full body of federal regulations was a big job. What couldn't be done through OMB, or with political appointees, was a job for the Task Force on Regulatory Relief. Directed by Vice President Bush, the task force directly solicited industry wish lists of regulations they wanted delayed or eliminated. Three months into the administration, it had already blocked 34 regulations on auto compaines alone—on bumpers, pedestrian safety, fuel economy standards, and lead-reduction standards for fuel, among others. As Gareth G. Cook reports in this issue, Reagan was particularly solicitous of Detroit in thwarting air bag requirements. "Federal regulations," Reagan told a gathering of auto executives during the 1980 campaign, "are the cause of all your problems."

If Reagan had pushed regulators to be smarter, not slower, or more results-oriented, he might have left a legacy of real reform. Pragmatists might even have forgiven some excesses if he had rationalized the system, consolidated overlapping programs, and tightened loopholes. Instead, Reagan (and Bush after him) ignored real problem areas, sought political points with ignorant denunciations of the regulatory state, and took credit for new legislation while subverting it behind the scenes. By 1989, regulatory spending was at an all-time high and public confidence in the system was at an all-time low. According to a 1988 *Times-Mirror* poll, 67 percent of Americans agreed that government was "usually inefficient and wasteful."

The Past is Prologue

Republicans aren't about to let a bad idea get in the way of good politics. And as with "Star Wars" and tax cuts, they're eager to mimic Rea-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gan on regulatory reform. Same industry backscratching, same populist veneer, same half-baked solutions. But you won't hear the same anti-government rhetoric this time. "Of course we're going to protect people," says Rep. David McIntosh (R-Indiana), chairman of the Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Natural Resources, and Regulatory Affairs. "That's our job." "Let there be no mistake," echoes Sen. Bill Roth (R-Deleware), "we need a clean environment, safe workplaces, and safe medications." These men pay attention to the polls. In 1994, *Times-Mirror* found that 82 percent of Americans believe "there need to be stricter laws and regulations to protect the environment." Similar sentiments are found on regulations of medications, food and water, and consumer products.

But scrutinize the proposed "reforms" and you'll find nothing of the sort. It's sabotage in disguise. Take cost-benefit analysis, the core of their strategy. "To free Americans from bureaucratic red tape," the Contract With America states, "we will require every new regulation to stand a new test: Does it provide benefits worth the cost?" But cost-benefit analysis, an essential element in private sector strategic planning, is an empty concept in government regulation. "Benefits" and "costs" of any act depend entirely on the perspective of the analyst. In 1981, Bush sought repeal of a Department of Agriculture requirement for labels on meat products that contained crushed bone, arguing that it cost "the economy" $500 million a year. That figure was an industry estimate of lost revenue, the cost of throwing away meatless carcasses instead of grinding them up and adding them to the pile. But if informed consumers choose not to buy $500 million worth of crushed bone, is that the fault of the regulation or the virtue of a free market? The Department of Agriculture hadn't even banned this sketchy food-product; it simply insisted that Americans be aware that their "prime ground beef" was, in fact, "prime ground beef—with tasty bits of crushed bone."

Ask the anti-regulation group's chief lobbyist to name a specific rule that needs to be repealed and she cannot name a single one.

Of course, in the hands of a dispassionate analyst, cost-benefit calculations can be a useful tool. Indeed, federal agencies already conduct them, and OMB still reviews regulations and haggles with agencies to make them as efficient as possible. But the Job Creation and Wage Enhancement Act, outlined in the Contract and now working its way through committees in the House, requires that such data be published, subject to judicial review, and approved by a peer review panel. This panel must consist of experts with "recent professional experience" in the area of regulation. "There is no prohibition," an OMB Watch report points out, "on industry scientists or representatives, or those with a financial interest in the regulation, serving on the peer review panel."

The real boondoggle is judicial review. Aggrieved businesses already have the right to challenge regulation. And a vast majority of regulatory decisions *are* appealed in courts—including 80 percent of the Environmental Protection Agency's and 96 percent of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's. The Job Creation and Wage Enhancement Act would allow companies to bring lawsuits *before* agencies reach their decision—meaning all their data and analysis can be challenged in court. When regulators seek to act on an "emergency," this too becomes a question for the courts—a prescription for endless delay. While seeking tort reform that would dramatically decrease the rights of individuals to sue businesses, Republicans seek regulatory reform to enhance the hand of business in blocking measures for public health and safety.

The Republican agenda contradicts itself. It claims to seek efficiency, but would produce the opposite: more meaningless paperwork, more rigidity, more gridlock. Unless the public eases its demand for basic safeguards and quality-of-life measures (which it won't), politicians in the pocket of big-spending lobbies like the NFIB will face a contradiction that no amount of ma-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

neuvering can reconcile. Establishing community standards, by definition, involves infringing, at times, on individual interests. Of course small business wants government "off their backs, out of their pockets, and off their land." This simplistic demand can't—and won't—be met. If anti-regulatory politicians weren't so adept at masking their intentions with vague language and euphemisms, this would be abundantly clear.

Who's to Blame?

When political leaders lie to the public, it is the fault of these leaders and the fault of those who let them get away with it. You can blame the Republicans for their scandalous dishonesty. But you must also blame the people who ought to know better. In a January 23 editorial, *The Washington Post* cautioned that Republicans were planning a "systematic assault on regulation" and that "sorting all through this is going to take a while." "Considering all that's at stake," they concluded, "it should." Considering all that's at stake, where has *The Post*'s coverage been? At press time, Cindy Skrzycki, the regulation beat reporter, had written fourteen stories since election day. Not one offered serious analysis of the effects of regulation. A 625-word profile of McIntosh, the upstart freshman representative leading the charge on regulatory reform, offered breezy assessments of his political style. The day before, McIntosh's subcommittee had held day-long hearings. "He used the hearing," Skrzycki reported, "to rail against the Clinton administration's 'insincerity' on regulatory reform. 'President Clinton is having a love affair with federal regulations,' he said." Thanks. But what about his proposals and their effects? And for background, how about his work on Dan Quayle's Council on Competitiveness, the Bush administration's equivalent of the Task Force on Regulatory Relief? McIntosh, the Council's executive director, developed a reputation as a fierce ideologue, fighting a worldwide treaty on rare species, as well as EPA limits on sulfur dioxide and lead battery incineration.

The Post isn't the only news source missing the story on regulations. There has been no shortage of committee hearings or new legislation in the last several months; still, none of the country's top newspapers or magazines have given this subject much attention. The stories that are written, for the most part, are vague and superficial. The *Los Angeles Times* compared the FDA to a pendulum—"either it swings too far in relaxing its standards...or it swings too far in the other direction by being too tough." And *The New York Times* offered this gem: "Critics [of a regulation bill] say the legislation would tie the regulatory process into knots of scientific review, economic analysis, legal challenge and political gridlock. But advocates say the bill would guarantee simplicity and common sense where now there is obfuscation and red tape." This is accurate so far as it goes, but without providing details—concrete examples of regulation's real-life benefits and real-life flaws—it's almost entirely without value.

Even after House Speaker Newt Gingrich labeled FDA chief David Kessler "a thug and a bully," the coverage was barely palpable. *The Wall Street Journal* reported Gingrich's ties to pharmaceutical companies and *The Post* probed the efficacy of the "Cardiopump," a device Gingrich chided the FDA for not having approved. But what about the efficacy of the agency itself? Gingrich called the FDA "America's leading job killer," with the EPA "a close second." He suggested replacing the agency with biomedical "entrepreneurs" (in other words, self-regulation). This is the Speaker of the House toying with abolishing the FDA. Isn't that time for a hard look at the agency? Why *does* it cost an average of $230 million to get a drug from the laboratory to the drugstore? Why can't terminal AIDS and cancer patients smoke marijauna without risking arrest? Do other countries manage drug regulation better? According to a recent study by Public Citizen, the FDA deserves some credit; over the last 22 years, the U.S. has been forced to recall dramatically fewer drugs (9) than France (31), Germany (30) and the United Kingdom (23). The point isn't that newspapers should rush to the FDA's defense, but that it should do whatever possible to keep this debate grounded in facts.

If newspapers fail in their neglect of this subject, other media overemphasize regulation. Network TV news, and news "magazines" in particular, sniff out malfeasance like blood

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hounds and ignore the bigger picture. They demonize regulators and turn flukes into scandals. ABC News's John Stossel built a career on this tabloid-style "consumer advocacy." Then, last year, he switched course and broadcast a special asking "Are We Scaring Ourselves to Death?" which not-so-subtly argued that the FDA, EPA, and Consumer Product Safety Commission caused more trouble than they were worth. Stossel trotted out horror story after horror story, but never put regulations into context and offered no practical suggestions. In recent speeches to libertarian groups, Stossel made his facile argument explicit, endorsing "self-regulation" of industry. Federal health and safety regulations, he said, "don't make life safer. They make life less safe." If his simplistic analysis didn't so closely resemble that of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, we might have less cause to worry. Indeed, Stossel's farce will likely be repeated in scores of committee hearings in the months to come.

The impulse to sensationalize regulation, on one hand, or to virtually ignore it on the other, is not hard to understand. Readers slogging through this article can attest to the subject's tediousness. And unlike financial affairs—an equally complicated subject that draws enormous attention in newspapers—the constituency for regulation stories is not as easily defined. But although the politics of regulation can be mind-numbing, their real-life implications are enormous. Casting stories about regulation as a struggle between anti-regulation reformers and pro-regulation defenders of the status quo is inaccurate and irresponsible. And educating the public has never been more essential.

What, then, should journalists be reporting? In three words: examples, examples, examples. The scope of federal health and safety regulations is enormous; it consists of thousands of employees spanning dozens of agencies. Some regulations set unrealistic goals and ought to be reined in. Other regulations are aimed in the right direction, but just don't get the job done. Still others are too feeble, held back by timid lawmakers wary of offending a powerful interest. The point is that only by elucidating the real benefits and drawbacks of specific regulation will we make progress toward what should be a universal goal: providing basic protections in the most efficient way possible. While expressing strong support of regulation, *Times-Mirror* found, 63 percent of respondents also think "government regulation of business usually does more harm than good." Americans don't dislike regulation; they just want it done more effectively.

Getting it Right

Regulatory reform, it is important to understand, is not an oxymoron. In his 1993 book, *Breaking the Vicious Cycle*, Stephen Breyer points to the illogic of a regulatory system that has been built, not by master plan, but by a series of responses to individual crises. Even if each regulation is sensible and well enforced, it may not make sense in the larger context. "Rules designed to limit zinc in water," Breyer offers for example, "raise the cost of using regular diapers, encouraging the use of disposable—and doubtfully 'recyclable'—diapers, which are a major contributor to landfills." While the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration vigorously regulates safety, its fuel economy standards have been an incentive for automakers to build smaller cars, which are in fact less safe.

Often, poor communication within an agency, or between different agencies, lends the regulatory system a random quality. Breyer points out that, at one point, the EPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response had classified as hazardous waste certain elements found in chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). Resulting rules severely discouraged the recycling of refrigerators, which contain CFCs. Meanwhile, another EPA department, the Office of Air and Radiation, was urging that refrigerators be recycled to save the ozone layer.

As another example, take meat supply oversight. The FDA checks live animals in farms or pens, but the Department of Agriculture assumes control once they reach the slaughterhouse. The two share oversight at retail outlets—with jurisdiction over different products—but only the FDA can conduct inspections. The EPA, meanwhile, determines "tolerance levels" for pesticide residues in food. But—the loop closes—the FDA checks for chemicals in the tissue of livestock. Even within

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

individual agencies, as Breyer points out above, coordination among departments can be non-existant. "I've been in meetings," says Gary Bass, director of OMB Watch, "where business comes into EPA and says, 'Look, we'll give you more information than what you're requesting, if you just get all your different offices—the air office, the water office—if you get your act together and collect it uniformly.' And you look around the room and you see the officials; they don't have the authority to talk cross-program."

The irony of Republican reforms is that they extol the values of the free market, competition, and common sense, but would make regulatory bureaucracies even more top-heavy, cumbersome, and inefficient. "What the legislation on Capitol Hill is designed to do," says Joan Claybrook, president of Public Citizen, "is to dismantle these programs through gridlock. To put forth so many costly, unnecessary red tape requirements that the decision maker could never make a decision." This worsens the bureaucratic snarl that drove 68 percent of Americans in 1994 to think "dealing with a federal government agency is often not worth the trouble," up from 58 percent in 1987.

Real reform often requires giving regulators *more* flexibility, more authority to set guidelines and to use common sense to judge whether they are being met. As opposed to "command and control," "performance standard" regulation is often far more effective. In 1985, the *Monthly* ran a story headlined, "Why Regulators Need a DON'T DO IT IF IT'S STUPID Clause." The reporter detailed a six-year, multi-million dollar battle over a harmless pile of lime in Minneapolis. The EPA had determined that any material with a pH higher than 12 is hazardous. And though the 75,000 tons of lime could have been useful in any number of ways—lime is commonly used in agriculture, construction, and even pollution control—its designation as hazardous meant no one could touch it. Republican measures would make the problem worse. When an agency is in perpetual threat of a lawsuit—not just over a decision it makes, but over any of the evidence it uses to make that decision—it will become sluggish, documenting each step with reams of paperwork, avoiding exposure to criticism. Agencies will become timid, afraid to make decisions. This strategy runs counter to public interest, but, in the long run, it hurts "special interests" (like small business owners) even more. Ask your local shopkeeper what he dislikes most: being told what to do, or not knowing what's legal or illegal. I suspect you'll find that it's not Orwell's world he fears, but Kafka's.

The last thing the system needs is another layer of checks and balances, analyses and judicial review. "The less his power," Woodrow Wilson wrote of the civil servant in 1883, "the more safely obscure and unnoticed does he feel his position to be, the more readily does he relapse into remissness." Although bureaucrats get the blame for this rigidity, often the fault is with the laws themselves. To assert authority, Congress often steps further than it should. The Delaney Clause of the 1958 Food Additive Amendments to the FDA legislation prohibits any carcinogenic additive to food, regardless of the concentration or risk involved. And the Solid Waste Disposal Act states that waste may contain "no migration of hazardous constituents." Both of these examples, Breyer writes, "seem to instruct the agencies not to permit addition, removal, or packaging of or by any substance that contains even a single molecule of an offending chemical, however large the cost or small the risk." The most egregious examples of this trend come from the Reagan years, when Congress was rightly suspicious that the executive branch would do as much as possible to subvert the intent of the law. The 1986 Safe Drinking Water Act requires all water to be purified, regardless of its initial level of safety, and that any synthetic substance in water, regardless of its concentration or health effects, be treated. In Anchorage, Alaska, city officials found themselves in violation of an Act provision that requires a 30 percent reduction of waste, because there wasn't enough waste in the water to remove. In other words, the water was too clean to comply with the law. Rather than spend $160 million on a new wastewater treatment plant, the city arranged for local fish-processing plants to dump fish entrails into city sewers so the city could remove them, and meet the standard.

Finding problem spots, though, is the easy part. Good regulations are often more difficult to identify, since their effectiveness gives the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

impression of normalcy. Regulators are easily blamed—either for being too cautious or too lax—and rarely receive credit for doing their job effectively. Manufacturers eagerly take credit for initiatives they've been forced into. Catalytic converters are a good example. Auto companies fiercely resisted pollution control devices, estimating they would cost about $3,000 per car. General Motors testified in 1973 that the requirement could lead to a "complete stoppage of the entire production...with the obvious tremendous loss to company shareholders, employees, suppliers and communities." When the EPA stood firm, General Motors introduced the converters, touting its technological prowess and environmental sensitivity. The year after the converters were made standard, hydrocarbon and carbon monoxide emissions from new cars were cut in half. In 1995, the typical new car emits about one percent of the pollution of 1970 models, made before the first real Clean Air Act, and the cost per car is several hundred dollars. Same with lead in gasoline. Industry fiercely resisted the restrictions initially, but the increase in cost per gallon of gas has proven to be merely one penny. Now, with lead effectively eliminated as an air pollutant, oil companies beat their breasts with pride.

In the late fifties and early sixties, the sedative thalidomide was licensed and marketed in several dozen countries. Between 1959 and 1961, pregnant women using the drug across 20 countries gave birth to 10,000 babies with serious, identical, and rare deformities. As the news began to spread, an American pharmaceutical company had an application pending with the FDA to market thalidomide in the U.S., but a skeptical FDA had not signed off. There are many variations on this story: isoproterenol inhalers, used to relieve asthma, caused 3500 deaths in England and Wales in the sixties; practolol, an anti-hyper-intensive, caused a number of cases of permanent or near-permanent blindness in England in the seventies. Of course, the tragedies that led to broadening the FDA's mandate are noticeable as well, providing proper reminder that a company's market incentive to test a product goes only so far. In 1976, the agency was given authority to regulate medical devices after the Dalkon Shield, an intrauterine contraceptive, was proven responsible for 18 deaths and 66,000 miscarriages.

Cars, drugs, and medical devices provide the most dramatic stories, but much of the success in regulation is in the commonplace. To appreciate the work of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, glance over the "recalls" page in *Consumer Reports* each month. In the January 1995 issue, you'll see that Krups blenders have blades that can break apart and embed slivers of metal in food. A new model of orthodontic pacifier can break apart and choke babies. And a new model of a wooden bunk bed can trap a child's head and lead to strangulation. Even when companies issue voluntary recalls, the pressure applied by the CPSC—and its authority to levy fines—is no small factor.

Although you're not likely to hear this from Republican "reformers," often the problem with regulation is that it's too weak, not too tough. The Federal Aviation Administration, for example, has been rightly chastised for its "tombstone mentality," failing to institute reforms until a tragedy—or series of tragedies—sparks public opinion. As early as 1980, for example, the National Transportation Safety Board was urging the FAA to require crash-resistant fuel lines and tanks on commuter aircraft, a precaution the agency postponed for nearly 15 years. And the need for tougher requirements for de-icing was evident as early as 1982, when 78 people died when an Air Florida jet with iced wings crashed just after takeoff from Washington, D.C. The FAA waited ten years—and for 23 more ice-related accidents—to take action. In both cases, administrative delay—due to unnecessary cost-benefit analyses and industry resistance—was at the heart of the inaction.

Although the first round of regulatory "reform" is well under way, the heartening news for citizens interested in honest dialogue on regulation is that much of the Republican agenda is long-term. In the next several years, committees in the House and Senate will go after regulation of food, drugs, air, water, and work safety. Journalists will have a peg, if they want it, for lengthy discussion of every link in the federal regulatory chain. And despite a less than auspicious start, the new majority party could translate their fervor into genuinely improving the system. Watch out, though. They could make it much, much worse. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tidbits & Outrages

GREAT MOMENTS IN MEDICAL ETHICS

Britain's *Guardian* newspaper recently reported that Einstein's opthamologist, Dr. Henry Abrams, had hidden Einstein's eyes in a New Jersey bank vault ever since removing them during the physicist's autopsy in 1955, and that he was currently seeking a buyer for them.

"WE ABSOLUTELY DENY THAT OUR NETWORK HAS ANY IMPACT ON VIEWER BEHAVIOR," SAID A FOX SPOKESMAN

A Colorado man was arrested after he hired a stripper to perform at his son's 12th birthday party. He told police that he thought he was just being "a cool dad."

FOR MORE DETAILS, WATCH YOUR MAIL FOR THE SPECIAL ENVELOPE SHOWING ED MCMAHON BEING RIPPED TO PIECES BY A MOB OF ZEALOTS

The government of Iran recently announced a contest awarding 10 gold coins to the short story that best depicts the "moments of fear and anxiety" British author Salman Rushdie experienced when he learned that the Ayatollah Khomeini had issued an edict calling for his death.

"GREAT JOB, ARNOLD, BUT NEXT TIME IX-NAY ON THE UHRER-FAY REFERENCES"

During an appearance on Capitol Hill alongside Newt Gingrich, Arnold Schwarzenegger referred to him as "our leader."

"TONIGHT'S EPISODE: TENSION MOUNTS AS SACCO AND VANZETTI ARGUE OVER WHO GOES FIRST"

A new syndicated TV show called "Death Row: True Stories" will feature reenactments of executions.

IF IT SMELLS LIKE A POLITICIAN. . .

To commemorate the inauguration of Oklahoma Governor Frank Keating earlier this year, a local company came out with "Perfectly Frank" cologne.

PARADE READINESS

The Pentagon recently admitted that it spends $175 million a year on service bands.

—Scott Shuger

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Case for (Some) Regulation, Part 2

Do you really think the car companies voluntarily installed airbags?

BY GARETH G. COOK

"We believe in cars that are engineered, not legislated."
—Ford advertisement, 1971

Lee Iacocca didn't know he was being taped. During a secret morning meeting on April 27, 1971, he sat in the Oval Office, next to his boss Henry Ford II, pressing his case on the president. He spoke frankly, unaware the meeting was another of Richard Nixon's famous Memorex moments. "You can see," declared Iacocca, "that safety has really killed all our business."

The Department of Transportation had just issued a rule requiring that new cars be equipped with passive restraint systems, such as automatic seat belts or airbags. The features would save thousands of lives annually, but Iacocca was determined to convince the president that the real national interest lay elsewhere. "What safety is doing to us is gonna make inflation," Iacocca can be heard to say. "The Japs are in the wings, ready to eat us up alive."

Iacocca's plea fell on eager ears. Nixon was deeply suspicious of the consumer-safety "Naderites," as he called them. "They're a group of people who aren't one really damn bit interested in safety," sputtered Nixon. "What they're interested in is destroying the system."

"We have these damn gadgets," the president continued, "and the [unintelligible] light in the seat belt is enough." As the two Ford executives left for lunch, Nixon assured them that he would "review" the situation and that "cost effectiveness is the word."

After the meeting, Nixon sent presidential pit bull John Ehrlichman to have a chat with Transportation Secretary John Volpe—to "slow [him] down, to get him off this business," as Ehrlichman later explained. It worked. In October 1973, Volpe delayed the automatic restraint requirement by two years.

That delay, sadly, was a typical episode in the three-decade Battle of the Bag. As early as the sixties, the automakers were gathering their political and economic muscle to steamroll a regulation that would add, at most, a few hundred dollars to the cost of a new car, while saving thousands of lives each year.

Michael Mayo and Matt Opalack provided research assistance for this article.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

New evidence, like the Nixon transcript, is painting an ever more detailed portrait of the lobbying equivalent of total war. The fight took the car companies' soldiers to all three branches of government—from the Oval Office, to the halls of the Capitol, to the hallowed courtroom of the Supreme Court. Although carmakers have come to embrace—and even profit from—the airbag, the war became, for them, a larger-than-life symbol of government interference in their bottom line, a war they were absolutely determined to win.

When Iacocca made his pitch to President Nixon, car safety standards were still very new. Seat belts weren't even standard equipment until 1968. The safety-consciousness that we take for granted today was, for most of the automobile's history, confined to a few dissidents inside the auto industry and the Department of Transportation. Most Americans simply subscribed to the car companies' routine explanation for the injuries and deaths that resulted from car accidents: "It's the nut behind the wheel."

But in 1965 an obscure young lawyer named Ralph Nader published *Unsafe at Any Speed*, a detailed description of the dangers of the Chevy Corvair, and the car safety debate went public. Nader showed how little effort went into designing cars that were better able to withstand accidents. Fuel tanks, for example, ruptured easily, and poorly designed steering columns sometimes impaled drivers.

The airbag predates even this decade of activism. The first patent was granted in 1953. By the late sixties, several teams of American engineers had refined the concept. Actually, the airbag's operation is simple. When a sensor detects a front-end collision, tough fabric bags inflate with nitrogen gas in one-tenth of a second, faster than a blink of the eye. The bags provide a soft cushion for the passengers' heads and upper bodies, which would otherwise strike the steering wheel, the dashboard, or even the windshield.

But auto executives didn't like the idea of an upstart consumer activist telling them how to design their cars. So they tried to shut Nader up—Detroit-style. General Motors hired detectives to trail Nader and dig up dirt. "They talked to friends, employers, and my old teachers," he recalls today. "They even had women approach me."

One day, Nader slipped away from a detective in the maze of Capitol building hallways. Frantic, the detective asked one of the guards which way Nader had gone, and the game was up. The guard demanded the hapless detective's identification and reported the incident. When asked by the press whether they had hired the man to tail Nader, all the car companies responded with a firm "No." All, that is, except for GM, which issued a firm "No comment."

As the Iacocca tapes show, most car executives quickly lost sight of the practical issue—whether airbags worked well and saved lives. But Ed Cole, raised in the old school of engineering and then president of GM, was convinced that airbags would work. He promised that GM would install one million airbags in its 1974 model-year cars.

But the generation that succeeded Cole (he retired in 1973) was less-inclined to view the airbag with a scientist's clear eye. To them the airbag was a symbol of outside forces—the government, Nader, the consumers—forcing their hand. Even as powerful evidence emerged proving the airbag was a relatively cheap and effective way to save lives—evidence confirmed by the automakers, own research—the car companies were adopting a siege mentality. "For them," declares James Fitzpatrick, a lawyer who fought the car companies before the Supreme Court, "it was a jihad."

Lloyd of Washington

The car companies, however, were not completely thick-skulled. The detective fiasco made them realize that they could not play by Detroit rules inside the Beltway. And so, in 1965, like explorers facing an uncharted wilderness, they hired the best guide they could: a brilliant Washington lawyer-lobbyist named Lloyd Cutler.

Of course, the silver-haired Cutler has since become a Washington icon—Counsel to the last two Democratic presidents and one of the shining lights of the Georgetown dinner circuit. But in the 1960s, Cutler had not yet earned the highest title the Beltway has to offer—"wise man."

Cutler's first task was to derail the nation's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

first comprehensive auto safety legislation, which Congress had fashioned in response to the public outcry prompted by Nader's work. Hawks at the car companies wanted the bill killed, and they wanted Cutler to use everything in his insider's bag of tricks to get it done.

But Cutler was far more politically astute than that. The American auto industry's public image was already at an all-time low. Reeling from *Unsafe at Any Speed*, the industry was further set back by a Senate committee report that declared it had "met with disturbing evidence of the automobile industry's chronic subordination of safe design." An all-out, public assault against the safety legislation would be disastrous. Cutler knew he needed to take the back roads.

And so he went for the legislative jugular—committee staffers. "Cutler was a ferocious and brilliant lobbyist," recalls Mike Pertschuk, then a staff counsel with the Senate Commerce Committee, "but he was very subtle." For each provision of each new draft Cutler would suggest at least one alternative, almost imperceptibly reworded. And the changes were not always as innocuous as they seemed. A word change or two in the judicial review section of the bill, for example, would have made it easier for car companies to challenge any regulations in the courts. Had Nader not been down the hall, reviewing each of Cutler's proposed changes and telling staff members what effect the changes would truly have, the bill could easily have been eviscerated.

Congress ultimately passed the safety legislation, empowering the Department of Transportation (DOT) to issue minimum standards on auto safety. And Cutler, for his part, did win at least one important victory for his clients: Gone were the criminal penalties for not complying with the regulations.

Sucking in the Seventies

The next battle began in 1970, when Secretary of Transportation Volpe announced that all new cars sold in America would need to be equipped with passive restraints—either automatic seat belts or airbags—by 1973.

With that, the car makers went straight to their friends in the Nixon White House. They met so frequently that John Ehrlichman said he was concerned about breaking anti-trust laws and asked Attorney General John Mitchell to give official approval to the talks.

By the early seventies, though, Nader had an important, if unexpected, ally of his own. Don Schaffer, a fiery West Virginia lawyer who had climbed into the top leadership of the Allstate insurance company, had become convinced that airbags held tremendous potential to reduce car fatalities and injuries. That, he figured, would allow the insurance companies to lower their growing premiums—a frequent and growing source of complaints.

In 1973, Allstate offered a 30 percent discount for policies on airbag-equipped cars, and placed a special order for 800 Ford Mercury's that included the feature. Most of the special orders went to employees, but some were used in a series of tests which clearly demonstrated the bag's effectiveness. In one short film, a man and a woman climb into a '73 Ford Mercury. He accelerates up to 30 mph driving straight into a brick wall. The doors swing open and the two climb out of the wreck, smiling and unhurt. The airbag was proven effective more than two decades ago.

But by this time, the auto makers couldn't care less whether the airbag worked or not. To them, it had come to represent government interference, backed by a doggedly persistent consumer movement. "Regulation" was an epithet in the ambitious auto executive's vocabulary.

At the same time, the car companies were learning how to get things done in Washington. Hoping to defeat the new regulations, they poured money into their government affairs operations. By 1977 the Big Three had fifteen people devoted to lobbying.

According to records from the Federal Election Commission, the Political Action Committees of Ford, Chrysler and General Motors gave almost a quarter of a million dollars to members of Congress, in 1977-1978. Members of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, which oversaw the Department of Transportation, received an average of $1250 each in 1977-1978. (One member, Robert Griffin (R-MI), took in $15,000.)

Congress was of the utmost importance to the car companies, because in 1976 they lost their friends in the White House. Nixon, of course, had been a great help delaying the airbag regula-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion. And Ford's Secretary of Transportation, William Coleman, negotiated a voluntary agreement with the companies under which they agreed to install airbags in some of their cars, an approach that Cutler now champions as the "most sensible" of the government's attempts.

But Carter's choice for Secretary of Transportation, Brock Adams, a former Washington state prosecutor, was determined to get airbags into all cars. In July 1977, Adams announced a new regulation, again requiring automatic restraints, but giving the car companies until 1983—six years—to fully comply.

Already, Michigan Democrat Rep. John Dingell and Pennsylvania Republican Rep. Bud Shuster had devised schemes to stop Adams. Dingell was well-known around Capitol Hill as the car companies' best champion. (His wife was even a former lobbyist for GM.) He was also next in line to be the chairman of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Bud Shuster, the ranking minority member of the important transportation subcommittee, was another key airbag buster. The very day Adams announced his new rule, Shuster (who took in $2250 from the auto companies in 1977-1978) introduced a House resolution of disapproval with 161 co-sponsors.

This was the first of several Congressional attempts to thwart the Adams resolution during the Carter years, either directly through a "congressional veto" procedure that has since been declared unconstitutional, or indirectly, by attaching "riders" to Transportation's budget. General Motors took the lead, but lobbyists from all the auto makers swarmed to the Hill, making their case against the airbag.

"It was very hot and heavy," recalls former Congressman Tony Coelho. Coelho, who has suffered from epilepsy since receiving a head injury in a car accident at age 15, was a solid supporter of airbags. But the car companies could make congressmen pay for their support of airbags on completely unrelated measures. "If you were an [airbag] advocate," Coelho says bluntly, "they'd go after you on other legislation."

The car companies' lobbyists, of course, did not just use threats. They also made arguments. The most common was cost. In 1973, GM predicted that an airbag would cost $175; by 1981, their figure, at least to the public, had topped $1000. Making airbags mandatory, they argued, would make cars prohibitively expensive.

It was an old and effective ploy, but this time it didn't hold water for long. A DOT employee leaked a confidential memo showing that GM had purposely inflated the cost of the airbag three-fold. And a 1981 study by a Yale economics professor found that requiring airbags would save twice as much money—in saved lives and medical costs—than it would cost.

Grasping at straws, the car companies claimed that the chemical used to inflate the airbags, sodium azide, would cause cancer, even though it was far less of a health risk than, say, gasoline. They even circulated an old film showing pigs being gravely injured by inflating airbags.

In fact, the lobbyists' tactics on the Hill were just an extension of a broader campaign to sway public opinion against the airbag. One of the stranger examples of the public relations offensive involved a bit of self-sabotage. Before Cole retired from GM, he had established a marketing test program for the airbag. GM offered optional full front-seat airbags on its 1974 to 1976 model-year Cadillacs, Buicks, and Oldsmobiles. Although the bags themselves performed well, the experiment looked to be a disaster. Only 10,000 orders, as the car companies were to remind Congress again and again, came for the airbags. "Safety doesn't sell," the car makers declared.

But GM sabotaged its own sales. Its promotional efforts were tepid, and many dealers, acting on hints from the home office, actively discouraged customers from buying them, according to an article in *The Wall Street Journal* that appeared later. Many dealers, *The Journal* reported, knew "little about the airbag, did little to make buyers aware of it or whet their interest in it, and often sought to pour cold water on any interest that customers showed."

The auto companies were squashing interest wherever they could. When Allstate wanted to show a film demonstrating the airbags effectiveness, the insurance companies ran into an even more subtle weapon in the car companies' lobbying arsenal—the fuel of commercial television and magazines, the advertising dollar. All three networks refused to run an ad showing the airbag film, saying it was "too controversial." *Life* magazine, then a media powerhouse and cultural

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gatekeeper, also refused to run an Allstate ad explaining how the bag works.

While car makers were claiming as late as the early eighties that customers wouldn't buy cars equipped with airbags, their own marketing studies told a quite different story. According to a secret 1971 study, car buyers preferred airbags to automatic seat belts, which the industry was peddling as an alternative, by a wide margin. A 1978 study reached the same conclusion, even when the prospective customers were told airbags would cost an additional $350. The companies knew that safety *would* sell, but no amount of marketing research would sway them.

Car maverick John DeLorean saw first hand the lengths the auto companies would go to in the public relations battle. Before his failed car company and legal trouble, DeLorean was one of GM's shining stars. An early airbag advocate, DeLorean testified before the DOT—shortly after he resigned as a GM engineer—that airbags were practical, safe, and inexpensive. But when he returned to his Michigan home there was a telegram waiting for him from GM: "Your deferred bonus," it read, "has been canceled."

DeLorean also claims that GM destroyed many of its early airbag files, so that "nobody could say, 'Look what GM could have done.'" (A GM spokesman refused to comment on this.)

The car companies fought airbags any way they could. By the early seventies, the Washington law firm of Wilmer, Cutler, and Pickering was fighting the battle of delay in court. Representing Ford motor company in the Sixth Circuit Court, the automakers' home turf, the firm made a whole host of charges against the DOT, questioning whether it even had the legal right to require airbags. Although his broad claims were thrown out, Cutler's firm did win delay: The court ruled that the dummies used in crash tests were not specified carefully enough, and that until they were, no test results were valid. The DOT would not be able to enforce its requirements until it had built a better dummy. Pickering tried the same tactic again in the late seventies, but by that time the courts could not be convinced.

The Reagan Devolution

As the 1980 elections approached, the car companies were running out of delaying tactics: The Carter administration seemed intent on implementing the automatic restraint standard, albeit slowly, and the courts had upheld its right to do so. Lobbying was indeed building an anti-airbag majority, but not quickly enough.

Then came what the auto makers could interpret as nothing less than a gift from God: the Reagan presidency.

Reagan objected to governmental regulation in principle, believing, as Nixon did, that regulations caused inflation. "Federal regulations," he told a Detroit audience on the campaign trail, "are the cause of your problems."

Auto executives threw their support behind Reagan, and were soon glad they did. After winning the election, Reagan asked the car companies for a deregulatory "wish list." Then he picked his man to head the National Highway Transportation Safety Agency: Ray Peck, a former lawyer for the coal industry (never known for its concern for safety) with no transportation background.

In October, 1981, Peck came through for the Big Three. He overturned the mandate from Carter's DOT, thinking he had ended the debate by fiat.

But the airbag advocates took to the courts. State Farm Insurance, represented by Arnold & Porter lawyer Jim Fitzpatrick, sued the DOT for rescinding the automatic restraint standard without any cause. The move, they argued, violated the DOT's mandate to protect the public.

The car companies called again on Lloyd Cutler (and his partner Pickering) to fight for them in the courts. Despite their skillful protests, though, the U.S Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia agreed with State Farm, saying that "NHTSA's arbitrary action presents a paradigm of ineffective regulation," and that their move was not supported by "one iota of evidence."

But even this rebuke was not clear enough to the new anti-regulators at the DOT. They appealed to the Supreme Court, with Cutler again filing a brief for the car companies. In June of 1983, the Court issued a surprisingly sharp decision against the Reagan administration's attempt to short-circuit the regulation without cause. It called the decision "arbitrary and capricious" and, in surprisingly strident (albeit accurate) language, added that "the car companies . . . had waged the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

regulatory equivalent of war" on the regulation.

The victory was virtually decisive. Thirteen years after the DOT first issued the regulation, it looked as if airbags would finally make their way into cars and start saving lives. As if to agree with the court decision, a 1983 poll showed that more than 90 percent of Americans felt that automatic restraints should at least be offered in cars, and a 56 percent majority said they should be standard equipment.

Secretary of Transportation Elizabeth Dole, meanwhile, was under tremendous pressure from the White House to find a way out. On June 11, 1984, Dole issued a rule requiring automatic restraints in all cars by 1990; the rule would be void if states representing two-thirds of the U.S. population passed strict mandatory belt-use laws.

The car companies' interest in seat belt laws increased markedly. They set up an organization called "Traffic Safety Now" and raised a whopping $20 million. The car companies would improve their public image and, they hoped, finally kill their *bete noir*, the airbag.

But the insurance companies, buoyed by their success in the courts, had some tricks of their own. State Farm's Fitzpatrick realized that his clients could push for seat belt use laws, but shape them so they would fail to meet Dole's technical criteria for strictness. (The fine, for example, might be $20 instead of $25.) In the end, the car companies' effort to wriggle out of Dole's rule failed and—finally—they faced a real deadline.

Now-a-days, of course, it's difficult to watch TV for very long without seeing a car commercial that features the airbag. After years of demonizing the safety device and resisting it in every possible way, the car makers are making money off it. "The airbag," GM spokeswoman Nicole Solomon states plainly, "is a marketing feature."

Even Lee Iacocca, who once hated the airbag with a strange passion, came to see its marketing possibilities. In 1988, he ran a series of ads touting the airbag and promising that Chrysler (his new home) would be first to have the bag in all its cars. "Saul," jokes Arnold & Porter's Fitzpatrick, "became Paul on the road to safety."

Publicly, the car companies insist they could not have introduced the airbag any sooner. The bag, they say, was not technically ready. But GM's own fleet of 10,000 cars, sold between 1974 and 1976, has performed without a hitch. One wonders what today's cars would look like if all the effort put into defeating a regulation that has actually helped the industry—and saved lives—had instead been devoted to refining auto safety features.

As soon as car companies started to advertise *for* the bag, instead of *against* it, consumer demand skyrocketed.

"If we had it to do all over again, I think we'd do it differently," declares Richard Klimisch, who was a top Washington executive on safety issues for GM in the eighties. "I think we know now that we have to be more proactive."

Even Cutler and Pickering agree that airbags could have come sooner. "This is an area where government regulation is needed," says Pickering as the two recall war stories in Cutler's office. Cutler argues that the regulations were too overarching, and did not take the car companies' marketing problems into consideration. "The regulators and activists bear at least as much of the blame," Cutler says. "Coleman's voluntary approach was a lot more sensible. When Adams rescinded that rule, he set the cause back."

"That is ridiculous," retorts Adams. The car companies "were never going to go very far on the airbag unless forced." Indeed, there was nothing stopping the car companies from sticking to their voluntary agreement.

"A strange kind of abstraction can take hold," says Joan Claybrook, the head of NHTSA under Carter. "I believe that any one of these people would jump into a pond to save a drowning child, but for some reason, they could not see the human cost of [not implementing] the airbag." For Claybrook and Nader, Cutler's highly-skilled litigating was lobbying by another means.

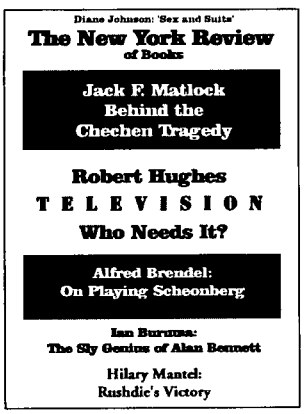
The Advocates For Highway And Auto Safety do not view the airbag battle as merely symbolic. They estimate that tens of thousands of lives could have been saved if the airbag had been made standard equipment back in 1973.

But for people like Iacocca, the airbag was first a nuisance and then a call to arms against an ever-intrusive government. In the mid-eighties, Iacocca joked with reporters who were constantly asking about the airbag. Iacocca was willing to bet, he told them, that his first question from St. Peter at the gates of Heaven would be about airbags. He just might be right. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Subscribe to the "leading intellectual journal in the US"*

* Esquire magazine



Since it began publishing in 1963, *The New York Review of Books* has provided remarkable variety and intellectual excitement. Twenty times a year, the world's best writers and scholars address themselves to 130,000 discerning readers worldwide... people who know that the widest range of subjects—literature, art, politics, science, history, music, education—will be discussed with wit, clarity, and brilliance.

In each issue subscribers of *The New York Review* enjoy articles by such celebrated writers as John Updike, Elizabeth Hardwick, Gore Vidal, Nadine Gordimer, Oliver Sacks, and countless others, as well as the literary bare-knuckle-boxing of the Letters to the Editors section.

If you think you too might enjoy the penetrating insights and arguments found in each issue of *The New York Review*, subscribe now with this special introductory offer. You'll not only save over 60% ($39) from the newsstand price, but you'll also get a free copy of *Selections*. With this offer you'll receive:

- **20 Issues** A full year's subscription of 20 issues for just $25.97—a saving of almost 50% off the regular subscription rate of $49.50 and a saving of $39 (60%) off the newsstand price.
- **A Free Book: Selections** *Selections* is a collection of 19 reviews and essays published verbatim from our first two issues. In it you'll discover how certain works such as *Naked Lunch* or *The Fire Next Time*, now regarded as modern classics, were initially perceived by critics when they were first published and reviewed.
- **A Risk-Free guarantee** If you are unhappy with your subscription at any time, you may cancel. We will refund the unused portion of the subscription cost. What's more, *Selections* is yours to keep as our gift to you for trying *The New York Review.*

The New York Review of Books

Return to: Subscriber Service Dept., PO Box 420382, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0382

❑ **Yes!** Please enter my one-year subscription (20 issues) to *The New York Review* at the special introductory rate of only $25.97 (a saving of 60% off the newsstand rate). With my paid subscription, I will also receive *Selections* at no extra charge and a no-risk guarantee.

❑ $25.97 enclosed* Charge my: ❑ AmEx ❑ MasterCard ❑ Visa ❑ Bill me.

Name _____

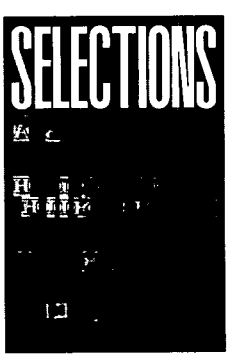
Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

A5C92G

Credit Card Number

Expiration Date/Signature _____



FREE WITH THIS OFFER

For faster service on credit card orders, fax to: (212) 586-8003.
Please include your own phone and fax in case of questions.

*Make checks or US money orders payable to *The New York Review of Books*. We accept US Dollars drawn on a US bank or Canadian Dollars drawn on a Canadian bank. If paying by CDN$ return to Mike Johnson, *The New York Review of Books*, 250 West 57 St., Rm 1321, New York, NY 10107. We cannot accept international money orders. Rates outside the US: Canada $52.50/CDN $69, Rest of World Regular Post $56.50, Rest of World Print Flow Air Post (recommended for the Far East and Australia) $83.50. Credit card orders will be charged at the US Dollar rates shown. Please allow 6 to 8 weeks for delivery of your first issue.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Usually First, Not Always Classy

The best of Clinton, the worst of Clinton: A new biography carefully traces both back to their roots

BY JONATHAN ALTER

First in His Class: A Biography of Bill Clinton
David Maraniss, *Simon and Schuster, $25*

This is a first-rate political biography by *The Washington Post* reporter who won a well-deserved Pulitzer two years ago for his reporting on Bill Clinton's presidential campaign. While the book contains no shocking revelations, it is full of small truths about Clinton's background and character. The book may not change any minds about Clinton, but it should contribute to a more complex understanding of a complex man. "The contradictions co-exist in Clinton," Maraniss writes. "Considerate and calculating, easy-going and ambitious, mediator and predator."

Clinton's paradoxes stem from those of his life. Ultimately, he is the product of several distinct and contradictory worlds. There is the Clinton from Hope, Arkansas: religious and unceasingly loyal to his family; the Hot Springs Clinton: often vulgar, and given to infidelity; and the Yale Clinton: polished and feverishly ambitious, yet genuine.

What has remained consistent throughout his life, though, has been Clinton's enormous gift for politics. Indeed, what is most puzzling about Clinton is why such a naturally talented politician should have so many problems managing the political dimensions of the presidency. Maraniss's book is not particularly analytical and it ends on the day Clinton announces his candidacy for president in 1991, so there are no direct answers. There are, however, little hints throughout.

Clinton's God-given political skills are clear almost from infancy. The key is in his ability to listen to other people, a surprisingly rare quality in politicians. Most politicians know that they must pretend to listen but are usually so interested in themselves that the pretense eventually shows through. Clinton is tremendously, even obsessively, interested in his own advancement, but his curiosity about other people's lives is evident throughout the book. Almost every one of Clinton's friends comments about it in some form. "Clinton was the master of the soft sell," Maraniss writes. "He remembered the smallest details of people's lives, and his deftness at personalizing the [thank-you] notes tended to overcome whatever unseemliness might otherwise have tainted a blatantly political contact."

At every school, he was the one white guy who was willing to sit occasionally at the black table. True, this was often an attempt to get votes in elections. When he was teaching at the University of Arkansas Law School and preparing for his race for Congress in 1974, it was said that he was an easy grader (especially for blacks struggling not to flunk out) because he didn't have a vote to spare in his race for

Jonathan Alter is a senior editor at Newsweek *and is a contributing editor of* The Washington Monthly.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Congress. But he befriended blacks and everyone else who crossed his path even when he wasn't running for anything (at Yale, for instance). The impulse was big-hearted and born of a real interest in how other people live.

An example of the overlapping Clintons: After riots devastated large sections of Washington, D.C., in the wake of Martin Luther King's assassination in 1968, Clinton's old Hot Springs girlfriend and next-door neighbor Carolyn Staley visited him at Georgetown. Clinton was in the process of breaking up with Staley—one of several girlfriends he had at the time—and he characteristically didn't have the "honesty," as Staley put it, to break up with her directly. But at the same time Clinton signed up with a relief agency to deliver supplies to dangerous sections of the city and took Staley on a mission the two of them would never forget.

This interest and energy is the essence of what makes Clinton likeable to most people he meets and loathsome to a minority who feel threatened by his personable nature. Throughout Clinton's life, a certain kind of person has simply detested him. There's even a scene where a dog can't stand to be near him. But no one can deny Clinton's thirst for life experience—his own, and that of others. It is his most appetizing appetite.

Bad Attitude

At first, this trait makes Clinton indiscriminate in his assessment of other people. At Georgetown, after winning a couple of elections, he loses the big one for student government president because his 19-point plan is too moderate and out of touch with the growing sense of ironic rebellion among students. (Sort of like 1994.) But the deeper reason is that Clinton lacked attitude. As one friend put it, "Bill never wanted to say, 'That guy [his opponent] is an asshole!' He would say, 'That's an interesting guy,' or whatever. We used to kid him about that—'Come on, Bill,' we'd say, 'Form the mouth, ass . . . hole'—but his basic instinct was to find, even with the most obvious asshole, something good. We wanted him to get angry in that campaign and he would not do it."

By the time he got to Yale Law School—after his Rhodes Scholarship—Clinton had acquired a savvy that grew out of intense study of older politicians. In a letter to Cliff Jackson—a friend at Oxford who 25 years later leaked the news about Clinton's draft status to the press (and who is himself revealed in the book to have been a draft dodger)—Clinton provides advice on how to win a White House Fellowship:

> About the White House Fellowships: the best story I know on them is that virtually the only non-conservative who ever got one was a quasi-radical woman who wound up in the White House sleeping with LBJ, who made her wear a peace symbol around her waist whenever they made love. You may go far, Cliff; I doubt you will ever go that far!

Clinton is apparently picking up unsubstantiated scuttlebutt about Doris Kearns, who 25 years later is a frequent visitor to the White House. Of course, this is exactly the kind of sex rumor that is now directed at Clinton. The letter to Jackson continues:

> There is no such thing as a non-partisan, objective selection process. Discretion and diplomacy aren't demanded so much by propriety as by the necessity not to get caught. I don't mind writing to Fulbright for you. . . . Wouldn't mind dropping David Pryor a line, either.

Here we see a touch of the cynicism Clinton would later decry, not to mention the kind of smug networking that drove Jackson and others crazy. By the time he was getting set to run for president and yakking on the phone to Gennifer Flowers (who was taping the calls) about his arch-rival in Arkansas politics, Sheffield Nelson, (who had claimed publicly that he had nothing to do with the infidelity allegations then being raised), Clinton was more than capable of getting the A-word to pass his lips:

"I stuck it up their ass. Nelson called afterwards, you know. I know he lied. I just wanted to see his asshole pucker."

This was the Hot Springs Clinton, the one with vulgarity and philandering in his blood. After all, his father had been married as many as five times in his short life; his mother and stepfather constantly argued about fidelity. The Hope Clinton was secure enough in his

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

own identity to tell his friends at Oxford that his mother was marrying a guy who ran a beauty parlor. (Though he didn't advertise that the man was an ex-con.) Clinton could have said his new stepfather was in business or used a hundred other euphemisms; instead, he chose family pride, and honorably so. The Yale Clinton skipped most of one semester campaigning for Joe Duffy in Connecticut and most of another running George McGovern's campaign in Texas, knowing all the while that the world of high status was something of a joke—a club where once you got in, you could slide through. (Yale was pass-fail.) Maraniss doesn't say it, but this idea of "getting over" at Yale and beyond was different in class but not in kind from the gambling ethic of Hot Springs.

Running Scared

The one time when the contradictions of his life came home clearly to Clinton was during the time he escaped the draft. Even though he eventually did expose himself briefly to the lottery—and probably would have gone into the service had he received a low number—this was not his finest hour, and he knew it. "I am running away from something for the first time in my life," he wrote his Rhodes friend Rick Stearns. The idiocy of the Bush campaign charges is clear. (Michael Boskin, Bush's chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, was a much bigger anti-war activist in Britain than Clinton at the time.) But the politics of the draft issue overshadow the deep personal wound left in Clinton—a wound he has obviously never come to terms with.

The irony is that the wounded Clinton of the famous letter to Col. Holmes is more appealing and thoughtful than the man he later became. I once asked Clinton about this in an interview and he dodged the question. But he had to know it was true. The bargain he struck was that he would get ahead—partly for ambition's sake, partly to accomplish certain things—but would do so at least partly at the expense of the young man he once was. The Clinton of the years before he entered Arkansas politics comes across far better in Maraniss's account than Clinton as governor, Clinton's astounding policy-wonk intelligence notwithstanding. (Maraniss points out that for all his love of Arkansas, Clinton was scheming to get back to Washington as a congressman only six months after his return home in 1974.)

Hillary's bargain was a little different. She had always been more practical and less ideological than advertised. A paper she wrote in college on Saul Alinsky disparaged community organizers who, she said later, didn't understand that "first, you have to win." She shocked British feminists who met her in the late seventies by explaining her strong religious faith. (Bill's faith seems genuine, too.) But this faith shaded over into righteousness. A minister once had to lecture her that God does not choose sides. Once, an adviser had to tell her it would look bad to have a swimming pool built at the governor's mansion that she truly believed she deserved. Hillary, one aide said, "was really mad. Very angry. She said, 'Why can't we lead the lives of normal people?'"

Most important, the belief in herself, her husband and their cause lent a sense of destiny to the way she viewed her union with Clinton. "I wonder how history is going to note our marriage," she told Carolyn Staley. When Hillary and Clinton discussed divorce—he had been cheating on her since before they were married—she told Betsey Wright that she had invested too much in Bill Clinton and was determined to see it through.

The common reaction to this statement is, "How cynical and sad." I disagree. As the Clintons themselves ask, why do they receive no credit for having held their marriage together, which—despite all the screaming matches—is clearly in the interest of their daughter? Whatever reason exists for staying together, Clinton has paid for the decision politically. Had they simply divorced, like many of today's political couples, Clinton's womanizing would never have been an issue. And however much people pretend not to care, womanizing is at the heart of character issues that threaten his presidency. Had Clinton amassed the same record—strong economy, lots of sucessful legislation—without the character baggage, he would not be seen as a great president, but at least as a decent one. To understand why the shorthand on this man is so insufficient, this book is essential. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Burning Bush

A new book by the former Israeli foreign minister claims that Bush betrayed Israel. The real betrayal was right under his nose

BY GLENN FRANKEL

Broken Covenant
Moshe Arens, *Simon and Schuster, $25*

The years between 1988 and 1992 marked a critical turning point in Israel's history. The country embarked on the hazardous transition from a small, ideologically oriented garrison-state to a more open, entrepreneurial, modern nation. It underwent the pain of suppressing and, ultimately, coming to terms with the Palestinian uprising; it braved the Gulf War; and it coped with the arrival of more than a half million Jews from the collapsing Soviet Union. Israel also endured what many then considered to be its greatest external threat: the Bush administration.

In his memoirs of this period, former Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens recalls his early recognition that relations between Jerusalem and Washington had cooled. He warns his aides, "They are going to play hardball with us, and if they feel that they have the political backing for it, they will try to cut our balls off without mercy."

It's not a bad summary of what follows. The Bush administration was Israel's worst foreign policy nightmare come true—an unsentimental Republican administration with neither political nor nostalgic ties to the Jewish state. Even Jimmy Carter was better: He may have been a dewy-eyed dove in Israeli eyes, but he was a Democrat and ultimately had to bow before the kind of pressures big-time Democratic supporters of Israel could apply. George Bush had no such constituency. With few prominent Jews in the Republican camp, Bush had a free hand in his dealings with Israel.

Glenn Frankel, former Jerusalem bureau chief for The Washington Post, *is the author of* Beyond the Promised Land: Jews and Arabs on the Hard Road to a New Israel, *published by Simon & Schuster.*

Rather than give a broad overview of this dynamic period, Arens has chosen to focus on the collapsing relationship between the Shamir government and the Bush administration. This gives Arens an opportunity to make a provocative point: The Bush administration arrogantly sought to "interfere" with Israel's internal affairs and dictate its foreign policy, ultimately causing the fall of Shamir and the Israeli right, and creating a peace process that Arens views as highly dangerous to Israel's fate. "Never before in its history had a government of the United States dealt in this manner with a sister democracy," he contends.

In so claiming, Arens says both too much and too little. Too much in that he mistakenly ascribes to a misconceived American intervention virtually all of Israel's difficulties during this crucial period; too little in that in doing so, he ignores many other critical factors. In the end Arens misses the most important point of all—that it was the vast political, social, and economic changes inside Israel itself, aided and abetted by the end of the Cold War, that ultimately caused the Likud's downfall and inexorably led Israel to its fateful deal with the Palestinians.

Even though he misses the main point, Arens offers us something useful: a behind-the-scenes look at how American officials throw their weight around when dealing with a recalcitrant ally. He recounts the diplomatic maneuvers of one of the great masters of the Washington game, the relentlessly ruthless James A. Baker III, who gave a reluctant, hapless, and often helpless Arens the full-body treatment of smash-mouth

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tactics, press leaks, and occasional charm, besting the Israeli foreign minister at every turn. Arens's account is self-serving and often disingenuously incomplete. Nonetheless, it offers a raw and unflattering glimpse of how Jim Baker did business, one that we're unlikely ever to see in Baker's own memoirs or anywhere else.

Recall that 1988 was a fateful year for the Shamir government. For 20 years, Israel had ruled over the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip with relative ease—the Palestinians living there had been sullen but supine. But by early 1988, Palestinian children were dragging their reluctant parents and the Palestine Liberation Organization behind them on the road to full-scale rebellion. Shamir, who won reelection that fall, came under enormous pressure from both the United States and a significant portion of his own electorate to make enough concessions to put an end to the rioting. By April 1989, he came up with something that became known as the Shamir plan, which called for elections in the occupied territories, followed by limited political autonomy.

Of course Shamir had no intention of conceding anything to Palestinians. A relentless ideologue, Shamir believed that Israel needed to maintain complete control of the West Bank and Gaza Strip to fulfill its manifest destiny as a nation. Palestinians living there were at best a nuisance to Israel, at worst a mortal threat. He would allow the Palestinians nothing more than the right to live under Israeli domination in perpetuity. But he had to make it look good. In this regard, he had a perfect ally in Arens.

Unlike Shamir, Arens deeply believed that Israel needed to come to practical arrangements with the Palestinians. Born in Latvia, he moved to New York with his family at age 13 and grew up in the United States, where he acquired an American accent and sensibility that included a strong regard for democracy and human rights. Although he moved to Israel in the late forties, Arens remained in many ways the most American of Israeli leaders. He can be curt, phlegmatic, and acerbic. But he is a very different man from Yitzhak Shamir, who saw democracy as just another tool to be used and abused for Israel's greater glory, and who secretly mocked Arens as naive, ineffectual and weak-willed.

When the Bush-Baker boys came to power, they believed they had room to maneuver Israel toward a breakthrough in peace talks with the Palestinians. The treatment started on Arens's first visit to Washington to meet with the new administration in March 1989. He was, he writes, "shocked" when, shortly before he arrived, Baker leaked to Thomas Friedman of *The New York Times* suggestions to ease tensions in the occupied territories that the secretary of state intended to ask of both Israel and PLO. "This was," Arens recalls, "an outrageous contravention of all diplomatic practice."

But it was only the first of what he describes as "a web of leaks, distorted background briefings and public pronouncements of a provocative and confrontational nature by the new secretary of state."

I was Jerusalem bureau chief for *The Washington Post* at the time, and I recall how disheartened and puzzled Arens was when he returned from Washington. His pride was hurt—how could any American administration treat him so shabbily? Despite what he writes, it took him quite a while to figure out that Baker was picking on him precisely because he saw himself as point man in Israel's relationship with the U.S. By cutting him down to size, Baker and Bush were making a point to Shamir: We're not playing around, so get serious.

But either Shamir didn't get the message, or he chose to ignore it. He arrived in Washington a few weeks later and had a private meeting with Bush at which the president asked if Shamir would be willing to suspend construction of Jewish settlements in the territories as a step to launch peace talks with the Arab states. Shamir's enigmatic response: "It will not be a problem." Shamir said later he had meant that if the Arabs really wanted to talk peace, they would not let a few dozen bulldozers in the West Bank stop them. But Bush interpreted Shamir to mean that he would indeed be willing to halt new construction. When the bulldozers kept digging, Bush understandably believed he had been lied to, and the Israeli-American relationship started down a deep hill. You won't find "it will not be a problem" in Arens's memoirs. But without the statement, little of what follows makes sense.

Of course, Bush and Baker weren't Arens's only problem. He was strapped inside the cockpit of one of the strangest governing pacts in Israel's history. It was dubbed a "national unity govern-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment"—a coalition between the Likud and the left-of-center Labor party, each of which wielded virtually equal power and shared the cabinet with a bunch of smaller, power-hungry religious parties. Arens kept insisting to Baker "that in the Israeli government there was only one foreign minister and that was me," when in fact there were at least three other loci of diplomatic power: the harder-lined Shamir; the softer-lined Defense Minister, Yitzhak Rabin of Labor; and the decidedly dovish finance minister, Shimon Peres, each of them working overtime to promote their viewpoints and to undercut each other.

Arens expressed shock and dismay that Baker maneuvered behind his back, opening separate lines of communication with Rabin and Peres and brokering ideas between them and the Egyptians. Baker undoubtedly tried to play off the various Israeli factions, going so far as to encourage a failed effort by Rabin and Peres to overthrow Shamir and return the Labor party to dominance through a parliamentary vote of no-confidence. But if you believe, as both good communists and Republicans do, that the end justifies the means, then Baker's ultimate success in bringing Israel and its Arab enemies to the peace table in Madrid in 1991 was well worth the political blood he spilled.

Arens's biggest problem ultimately isn't Baker, but Shamir. "Sometimes I felt that I was talking to the wall," he confesses at one point. "At others, he seemed to be vacillating between moods of gloom and defiance." Arens confesses that he never quite figured Shamir out. And indeed, it is clear that whether the subject is the peace talks, the Gulf war, the Gaza Strip, or Israeli politics, Arens and Shamir, those two supposedly close political allies, are often at desperate odds.

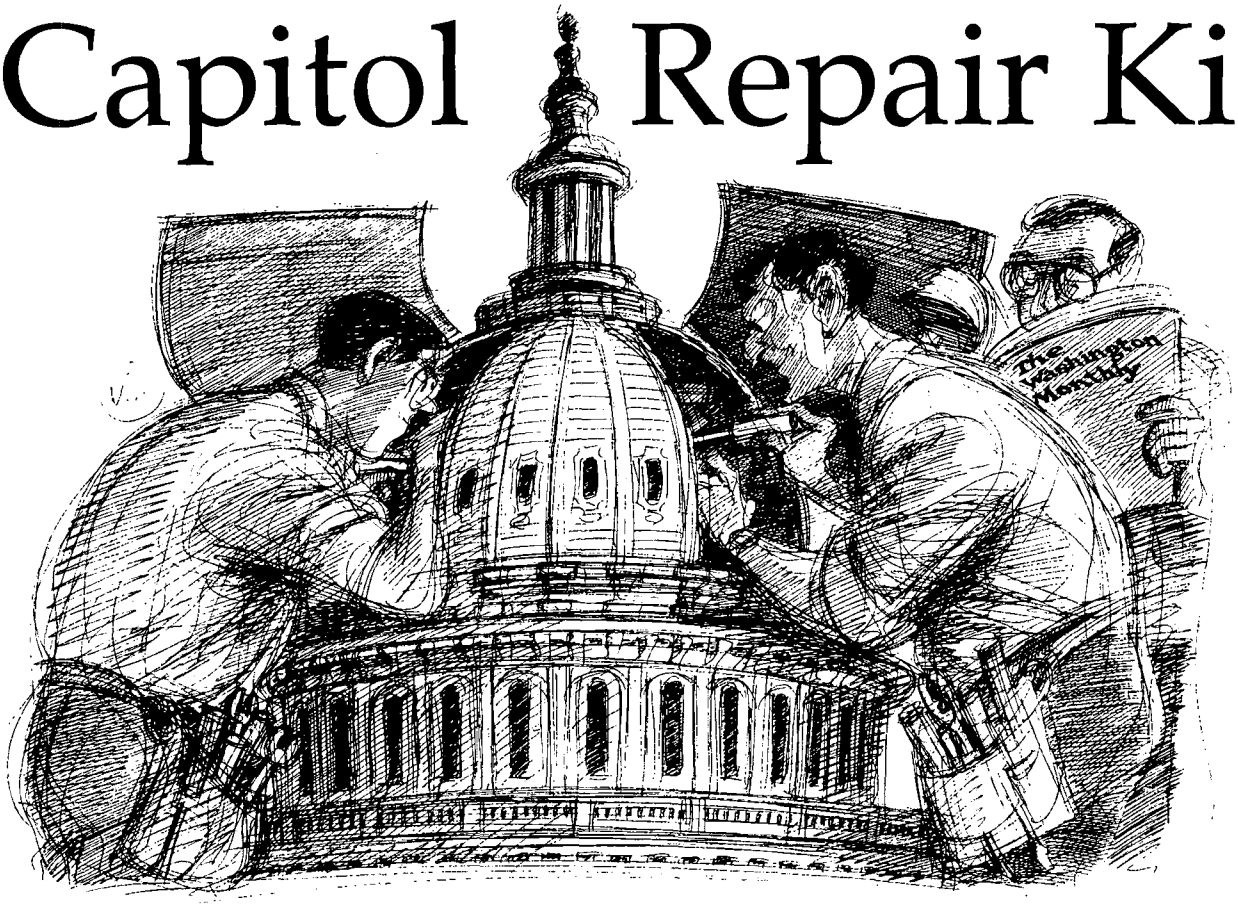
After Shamir won his showdown with Labor in 1990, he formed a new and smaller right-wing government and gave one of Arens's chief party rivals, David Levy, the foreign ministry. Arens was left with the defense ministry, a post he had held eight years earlier. He arrived just in time to become embroiled in yet another controversy with the Bush administration, this time over Israel's role in the Gulf War. The Americans insisted that Israel remain on the sidelines so as not to upset the fragile coalition of Arab and Western states that Bush and Baker painstakingly constructed to oppose Iraq. Arens chafed. In return for keeping a low profile, he wanted commitments from the White House for at least $1 billion to pay for the costs of civil defense and better weapons systems, constant consultation, and real-time spy satellite data, so that if the Iraqis attacked, Israel could launch a swift and accurate counterattack.

Arens persistently pressed for these commitments and was rebuffed at every turn. But once again it was Shamir—not the Bush administration—who really undermined Arens's efforts. The memoirs make clearer than any previous account how Shamir stood virtually alone in insisting that Israel violate four decades of strategic doctrine by not retaliating once the Scuds starting falling on Tel Aviv. Arens, too, supported restraint at first, but soon came to believe that Israel had to retaliate. He approved a military plan for intervention, then pushed Shamir hard to authorize it. The old man stalled for weeks; he even refused to allow Arens to visit Washington. When Arens was finally allowed to go, he met with Bush and Baker but found both cold to his demands for a cleared air corridor to Iraq so Israeli warplanes could strike back. "I assumed they were counting on Shamir to veto my plans to intervene," Arens writes. Indeed they were. And, indeed, Shamir did.

The swift defeat of Iraq gave Baker a new opportunity to assert American influence by pushing both Israel and the Arab states to agree to peace talks. After months of hard labor, Baker succeeded. Although still wary of Baker, Arens was delighted—Shamir was crestfallen. He went to the Madrid conference but had nothing to put on the table. In many ways the conference marked the beginning of the end for Likud. Despite riding a wave of popularity in the polls, Shamir's government revealed itself as bereft of ideas. Arens said he wanted Shamir to announce he would end Israeli rule in the teeming Gaza Strip and undertake needed economic reforms within Israel proper. Shamir rebuffed him, then applied the *coup de grace* by secretly caving in to Levy's demands to be designated as deputy prime minister on the Likud electoral list. Despite these insults—personal and political—from his own leader, Arens stoically soldiered on, even though he says he realized Shamir was taking the party to disaster. In June 1992, the Likud, which had ruled Israel for 15 years with only a brief respite, was driven from power. A day after the debacle, Arens announced he is retiring from politics.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Capitol Repair Kit



While the rest of the media tells you what's wrong with Clinton, **The Washington Monthly** offers ground-breaking, practical solutions the administration could use to solve some of the nation's thorniest problems. And we have fun doing it. The **Monthly** explores the quirks, cons, and paralysis that too often underpin American politics—then we offer a sensible way out. *The New York Observer* says we are the magazine "to which anyone who gives a damn about this country must subscribe."

". . . holds up a deadly accurate mirror to the Washington political culture, exposing its hypocrisies, stupidities, and unexpected triumphs." *–Chicago Tribune*

SUBSCRIBE NOW AND SAVE!

❑ YES! Enter my subscription for a full year (10 issues) to **The Washington Monthly** for only $26.

Name_____

Address_____

City _____ State _____ Zip_____

❑ Payment enclosed ❑ Bill me later

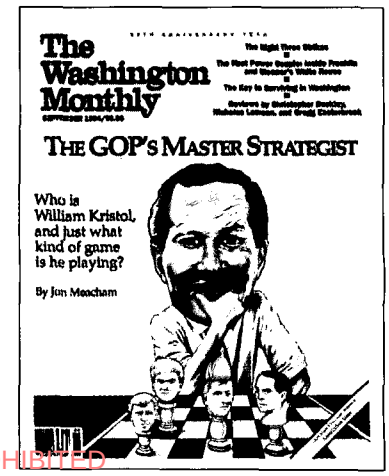
Charge my ❑ VISA ❑ MasterCard

Credit card # _____ Exp. _____

The Washington Monthly
Box 587
Mount Morris, IL 61054

For Canadian and other foreign subscriptions add $7. Please remit U.S. funds.

A5101



LICENSED TO GNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Arens blames lots of people for Likud's political demise—Bush, Baker, Yitzhak Rabin, the right-wing Likud ministers who undermined the government, the far right. But he ascribes the biggest share of the blame to Shamir, "a man who, for most of the Israeli public, seemed to belong to the past, not the future. . . . He symbolized immobility."

Before the Likud's defeat, Jim Baker gets one more appearance on stage. It was in the early days of the 1992 campaign, not long after Washington had conducted yet another round of toxic press leaks, accusing Israel of selling Patriot missile materials and technology to China and, at the same time, denigrating Israel's economy as too socialistic and shaky to qualify for American loan guarantees. Baker was all warmth and affability, according to Arens: "He said jokingly that he would be ready to campaign for me or against me, whichever would do me the most good. . . . I left with the feeling that I had never really known him."

Indeed, Arens never really does understand Baker or many of the other characters he battled during the four momentous years he describes. But it turns out that the man he knows least is the one who eventually destroys his career: not Baker, not Bush, not Peres or Rabin. What is clear from these briskly written memoirs is that the real "Broken Covenant" wasn't between Israel and the United States—it was between Moshe Arens and Yitzhak Shamir. □

The Washington Monthly

Journalism Award

November 1994

Joan Mazzolini and Dave Davis
The Cleveland Plain Dealer

Those who have suspected that hospitals make life and death decisions based on insurance coverage will find their worst fears confirmed in this series on perinatal care in Ohio, entitled "Babies at Risk." Proper delivery and early-life care for premature babies is notoriously difficult, and only a few hospitals are fully qualified in the field. But the field is also extremely lucrative. A single premature baby can bring in as much as $100,000 in insurance payments to the hospital, making these babies much-sought-after commodities. Mazzolini and Davis report that hospitals often refuse to transfer high-risk mothers and infants to more sophisticated hospitals in order to keep the money for themselves. The Ohio Department of Health, which rates hospitals, cannot force the lesser-qualified hospitals to give up patients even when there are clear dangers to both mother and child.

December 1994

Tony Horwitz
The Wall Street Journal

To research his incisive, humorous, and horrifying report on life at a poultry processing plant, Horowitz took a job at one. And his front-line view offers the best account yet of the growing sector of low-skill, low-wage jobs. "While American industry reaps the benefits of a new high-technology era," he writes, "it has consigned a large class of workers to a Dickensian time warp, laboring not just for meager wages but also under dehumanized and often dangerous conditions. Automation, which has liberated thousands from backbreaking drudgery, has created for others a new and insidious toil in many high-growth industries: work that is faster than ever before, subject to Orwellian control and electronic surveillance, and reduced to limited tasks that are numbingly repetitive [and] potentially crippling."

The Monthly Journalism Award is presented each month to the best newspaper, magazine, television, or radio story (or series of stories) on our political system. Nominations for any newspaper, magazine, or radio or television station in the country are welcome. The subject can be government in its federal, state, or municipal manifestation. Please send nominations to Monthly Journalism Award, 1611 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20009. Two copies of the article or broadcast text should accompany the nomination. Nominations for stories published or aired in January will close March 1. The winner will be announced in the April issue.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bloody Bosnia

David Rieff's howl of genocide misses the mark. But Tom Gjelten coolly probes the underbelly of a tragic war

BY GEORGE KENNEY

Sarajevo Daily: A City and its Newspaper Under Siege
Tom Gjelten, *HarperCollins, $24*

Slaughterhouse: Bosnia and the Failure of the West
David Rieff, *Simon & Schuster, $22*

We struggle to learn from the Holocaust, the measure of modern state terror, because we desperately wish to avoid repeating its evil. There's a risk, however, of overlearning. As the saying goes, a man with a hammer sees everything as a nail, even if it's a screw. Full-throated advocates of intervention in Bosnia often dwell on the question of genocide in the hope that the high moral imperative of "never again" may influence policy. As one of the original interventionists, I must confess here, I'm guilty myself of having used the term genocide (rarely, with qualifications) in reference to Bosnia, yet I've never been comfortable with insisting it was taking place—mostly because it distracts from the more urgent policy debate.

David Rieff, the author of *Slaughterhouse*, unconditionally believes the Serbs perpetrated genocide, and that most of the outside world watched indifferently, the same way it ignored the Holocaust. His book sums up what he saw in more than two years of frequent travel into the Bosnian war. In his first pages, he makes a comparison to Auschwitz, setting the tone for the rest of the book—an extended political tract against Serb efforts to exterminate the Bosnians.

George Kenney, a former Yugoslav desk officer at the State Department, is a writer in Washington.

The hollowness of the vague, unsubstantiated accounts of mass murder that appear every few pages dilutes Rieff's outrage to the point where it merely raises faint curiosity in the reader: The narrative does not communicate; Rieff paints no great and terrible picture of genocide. To the contrary, he awkwardly daydreams through a jumbled series of anecdotes, throwing in occasional half-baked theories about policy formation. Unless one subscribes to "the Bosnian cause," Rieff offers thin gruel with few new insights. *Slaughterhouse* can't live up to its title, because it isn't based on facts.

Where, one might ask, are the bodies? Genocide, of course, can't be merely a question of numbers, but one may use numbers as a rough—a very rough—way to figure out a threshold for declaring that genocide happened. Looking back after three years of war in Bosnia, a review of what we know about the numbers is sobering. How many people died? Rieff says more than 250,000. He never supports that claim, or explains its origins, but 250,000 is a number the press has used for some time. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees has no numbers for dead Bosnians, nor does the UN's peacekeeping office in New York. Sources at the International

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Committee of the Red Cross in Washington and Geneva tell me their estimates range from 20,000 to 30,000 dead. (They say that the war against the Turkish Kurds has been much deadlier, and in Chechnya the death toll may soon surpass Bosnia's.) Friends in the U.S. intelligence community tell me their best guess for confirmed dead runs to tens of thousands. (It's worth noting that Secretary of State Warren Christopher's office has sometimes demanded the numbers, only to discover they don't exist.) Intelligence sources add that official Bosnian statistics simply "come out of the air." The Bosnian Ministry of Health, for example, reports 200,000 dead or missing. Although we'll never know for certain, the number 250,000 probably evolved out of sloppy reporting of Bosnian government claims, a demonstration of the herd instinct at work among journalists. The question is not whether 250,000 dead is a wildly inflated number, but by how much it is wildly inflated.

There are good reasons not to call this genocide, at least until the bodies turn up. To misuse the word cheapens the memory of the Holocaust and diminishes the power to arouse horror against the real event. Rieff contends that we have a moral obligation to bear witness, but his preoccupation with his feelings, at the expense of factual reporting, obscures what it is we ought to be bearing witness *to* in Bosnia. As news accounts amply demonstrated, Serb policy was to ethnically cleanse, or violently chase out, all non-Serbs from the areas Serbs coveted.

Reluctance to use the term genocide does not lessen the barbarity of "ethnic cleansing," which resulted in over 2,000,000 refugees. Nor does it diminish the need for a thorough UN war crimes tribunal effort to sort out the guilty from the innocent on all sides. With much smaller numbers of dead, however, differences among the warring sides begin to blur palpably. Yet Rieff builds on his exaggeration of mass murder to heap contempt on the UN for drawing a "false moral equivalence" and falling, he says, into a Munich-like trap of peace at any price.

Late in the book, tucked in as almost an afterthought, Rieff quotes a UN Protection Force commander who explains that politics drove a UN mission concerned more with appearance than with results. Rieff expresses repeated disillusionment and bewilderment; like many analysts outside government, particularly in academia, he takes UN statements at face value to derive a pristine theoretical explanation of policy, when the political dynamics behind UN actions are as, if not more, important. I agree with much of Rieff's colorful critique of UN operations in Bosnia. But a worm's-eye view of UN results that ignores UN officials in New York and elsewhere misses much of the relevant story, as well as an opportunity to understand why international security institutions are failing.

To his credit, Rieff condemns as simple-minded the notion of lifting the arms embargo against the Bosnian Muslims (Senator Dole, take note.) It's obvious if you do some arithmetic: There are more than 1,000,000 Muslims in central Bosnia, 500,000 Serbs, but around 9,000,000 other, sympathetic Serbs in the neighborhood. With what kind of arms exactly could the Muslims win a protracted war? Neutron bombs? Rieff is inconsistent, because he favors the efforts of arms smugglers, but he honestly recognizes that for the West to meaningfully aid the Bosnian Muslims it would require going to war, suffering many Western casualties, and killing many Serbs, including noncombatants. It's a valid question whether such an intervention might kill more people than were already killed, or more than it might save.

No matter, since Rieff has given up his hopes for intervention. And he believes Bosnia is now irrevocably divided. It's unclear where he thinks the war is going, or whether he ever thinks about the future apart from his more general, apocalyptic passages about blood, fire, and the sword for Europe—notions that, like his genocide claims, need further analysis and evidence to persuade.

Self-absorbed in his musings on genocide, Rieff sometimes descends to caricatures of the horrors of war, with scant sensitivity to real Bosnian individuals. Comparing traveling in Bosnia to visiting a friend with AIDS, he brings an inappropriately surreal psychology of victimhood to bear. Although Rieff indignantly rejects charges that Bosnia provides much of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Western press corps, visiting entertainers, and various glitterati a mildly dangerous, titillating exploration, he offers no serious reflection on the irony of his being able to enter freely and leave what is truly a prison for its inhabitants. That freedom was among the most disconcerting emotional experiences I had in my travels to Sarajevo and through central Bosnia in 1992 and 1993.

Thankfully, Tom Gjelten provides a corrective. Gjelten details his experiences covering the former Yugoslavia for National Public Radio between 1991 and 1994. To tell the story of the war, he looks at it through the eyes of the staff of the Sarajevo newspaper, *Oslobodjenje*, in unvarnished personal detail. His elegant writing contains a wealth of context with cool, understated judgements. It's the right starting point for deciding how to handle the crisis. Unlike Rieff, Gjelten refrains from making charges of genocide, using the word in only one passage, where he characterizes the war as having "genocidal aspects" in which over 100,000 Muslims died (though he, too, gives no basis for that figure).

Sarajevo is a vision of the future because it proves the veneer of civilization is paper thin.

Gjelten reveals the Sarajevans' awful personal humiliation, their heartbreaking realization that normality was irrevocably shattered and that only a lucky few could escape. His book is less about the politics of war than the human and philosophical dilemmas of professionals struggling with conflicting duties. Despite disclaimers of sympathy for the Bosnians, Gjelten submerges his personality into a neutral observer; that's a difficult and rare achievement in writing about the tragedy of Bosnia. His moral lesson is a reprise of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*: Nobody should imagine he is immune to the lure of hateful depravity or to a weakened sense of depravity as one fights it. Sarajevo becomes, as Sarajevans like to say, a vision of the future—not because the world is doomed to experience ethnic violence, but because Sarajevo proves the veneer of civilization is paper-thin. The abhorrent has a way of shading into acceptable social practice. Sarajevo, site of the 1984 Winter Olympics, in its gritty way symbolizes modern anxiety about civilization's tendency toward collapse.

Vlado Mrkic, *Oslobodjenje*'s senior Serb reporter, paints an impressionistic picture of how the war hurts all innocents, but he finds himself increasingly embittered, on the wrong side of political correctness. The newspaper censors his criticism of the Bosnian government. It can't, for example, bring itself to report on organized crime in Sarajevo until after it's (partially) cleaned up. Nor can *Oslobodjenje* explore who's to blame for Muslim-Croat fighting in central Bosnia raging from early 1993 to early 1994. Gordona Knezevic, a Serb who returned from Cairo in 1991 to become a political reporter and then deputy editor, takes an increasingly pro-Bosnian government line, until she too realizes the paper must oppose hardline Muslim fundamentalists in the government, despite the risks for *Oslobodjenje*'s access to resources (fuel, newsprint) and political independence. Finally fed up by the war, Gordana devotes all her energy to getting her son out of Sarajevo and out of Bosnia. Having succeeded, she also flees. Kemal Kurspahic, the Muslim editor who keeps the paper going in its darkest hours, moves to Washington, DC, worried that his fight for a non-political Bosnian free press may already be lost.

Multicultural, sophisticated Sarajevo wakes up when the shooting stops (Western threats to bomb Serb siege guns produced a tenuous calm

The Washington Monthly

Summer Internships

We're now accepting applications. The position includes writing, editing, research, and business work.

Send a resume, three writing samples, and two references to:

The Washington Monthly
1611 Connecticut Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20009

DEADLINE IS APRIL 10. DECISIONS BY APRIL 20

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from February 1994 to the present) only to find that while it defended itself from Serb nationalists, its society was turned over to coarse Muslim refugees who cared little for pluralistic values. This drama captures precisely a continuously evolving Sarajevan sense of surprise at the war. The Sarajevans fail to see the war coming as the first shells began to fall. They fail, at each step, to see that the West won't intervene. They fail to see when they have lost the war. They largely fail to see, or admit, how much they have been changed.

Sarajevans, like Americans, believe that while sometimes bad things happen to good people, ultimately good will triumph. Thus they reject compromise with injustice. Their thirst for justice inexorably transforms under pressure into a thirst for revenge. Gjelten puts this in more nuanced terms. "The Serb nationalist forces," he says, "did not conquer Sarajevo," but they "weakened Sarajevo enough to change the balance of political forces in the city and strengthen the hard-line Muslims who had nationalist designs of their own. Those Sarajevans who were struggling for a civil state slowly gave up."

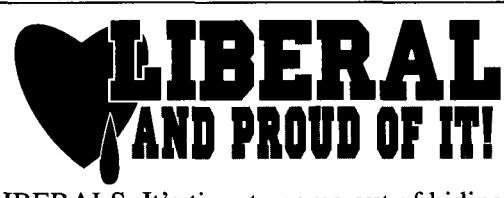
About two-thirds of *Sarajevo Daily* concerns the war; one-third is background. Gjelten's gloss of Balkan history up to the eighties is better, and more readable, than any available academic or journalistic treatment. Yet even his description of the events that resulted in Yugoslavia's violent disintegration remains incomplete.

It's correct to argue, as Rieff, Gjelten, and most Western commentators do, that the war did not spring from "ancient ethnic hatreds," that it is rather an essentially modern political phenomenon of evil, petty opportunists creating hatreds and false histories from whole cloth. (Gjelten notes that Radovan Karadzic, the leader of Bosnian Serb nationalists, failed chicken farmer, sometime poet, and convicted embezzler argued with apparent sincerity, only a short while before the war, that relations were excellent between Bosnia's Serbs and Muslims. Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic also opposed nationalism until he discovered its power as a political vehicle.)

The Croats and the Slovenes, however, also played their part, frightening and goading Serbs of all stripes to support extreme nationalists in what they, perhaps understandably, felt were defensive measures. Despite the Serb nationalists' intention to wage a violent war, the Croats and Slovenes shouldn't have guaranteed that outcome by backing the Serbs into a corner. Some fighting was probably inevitable, but the carnage we have seen was not.

A minimalist historical gloss should also question the West's role in adding strains to the crisis through ill-considered international recognition of secessionist states like Bosnia and Croatia. Since the West was never willing to guarantee their independence, recognition confers at best artificial conventions such as seats at the UN and embassies abroad. Yet the idea of Croatia and Bosnia as legitimate states focuses grievances much more sharply among combatants, making a settlement infinitely harder to reach. Enamored of ratifying the notion of a state system, Western leaders turned a blind eye to "anomalies" from fixed interstate relations.

Although Gjelten doesn't discuss international issues or intervention, the contrast of his work with Rieff's points out as plainly as anything can what mires the interventionist debate: We have no common agreement on a definition of the problem. Complicating matters, the problem changed and evolved over time, so that solutions that might have worked at earlier stages became inappropriate later. Because Gjelten's book opens the door to a fresh discussion of definitions, it's a tremendously important inspiration to rethink the West's stalled policy. That the book doesn't cover all the issues is not a fair complaint. In the shelf of books that has appeared on the war in the former Yugoslavia, none presents a complete picture, and none will, until we see the end to the war, or even the beginning of the end. □



LIBERALS: It's time to come out of hiding!
Now you can show your colors with our top-quality
T-Shirts and Sweatshirts in Black and Bleeding-Heart Red on white.
Sizes M, L, XL. T-Shirts $15.95, Sweats $26.50. $4.00 ship per order.
SINGLE CANDLE DESIGNS (800)439-8678
Visa /MC/AMEX -- 24 hour / 7 day
Check / Money Order -- PO Box 2535, Crossville, TN 38557

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books

BROOKINGS

REVIVING THE AMERICAN DREAM
The Economy, the States, and the Federal Government
Alice M. Rivlin
An essential reference for today's debate on devolution! "An urgent, well-argued case for abandoning rigid old ways of looking at public policy issues and government.... Rivlin unfailingly explains in nice, straightforward English what the numbers show." *The New York Times Book Review*
cloth $18.95 / paper $10.95

NATIONAL STANDARDS IN AMERICAN EDUCATION
A Citizen's Guide
Diane Ravitch
"Because she is the best historian of American education, because no one has been more principled about what Americans need to know and be able to do, because she has done so much to help create national standards, Diane Ravitch is the right one to write the definitive book." Lamar Alexander, former U.S. Secretary of Education
cloth $22.95

MAKING SCHOOLS WORK
Improving Performance and Controlling Costs
Eric A. Hanushek
"The only remedy at hand is the rigor of economic analysis which Eric Hanushek and his associates have brought together in *Making Schools Work*. A magnificent achievement." Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan
cloth $34.95 / paper $14.95

PLAGUES, PRODUCTS, AND POLITICS
Emergent Public Health Hazards and National Policymaking
Christopher H. Foreman, Jr.
"Foreman examines the 'damned if you do, damned if you don't' kind of situations when public health officials must weigh demands for emergency response and for exceptions that challenge consistency and fairness in policymaking. He offers wise guidelines for coping with this recurring governmental dilemma." Harvey M. Sapolsky, MIT
cloth $34.95 / paper $14.95

THICKENING GOVERNMENT
Federal Hierarchy and the Diffusion of Accountability
Paul C. Light
"Paul Light has written a down-to-earth description of the federal government's stultifying layers of bureaucracy and how it got that way. His book is required background reading for anyone with an interest in cutting clearer and shorter pathways between government decisionmaking at the top and implementation at the most basic service level." Senator John Glenn
Copublished with the Governance Institute
cloth $29.95 / paper $11.95

THE FEDERAL BUDGET
Politics, Policy, Process
Allen Schick
"Anyone who wants to understand federal budgeting should read this book.... Federal budgeting has complex rules and arcane terms, but Schick has a gift for explanations that are clear, entertaining, and insightful." Martin Olav Sabo, Chairman, House Budget Committee
cloth $36.95 / paper $15.95

THE PRESIDENCY IN A SEPARATED SYSTEM
Charles O. Jones
"Jones powerfully elaborates the point that ours is not a 'presidential system,' but instead a system of separated institutions deliberately mixed up in one another's doings.... I hope it is widely read, especially by all who now purport to use the system, or to change it. The country would gain if they all understood it. Jones does." Richard E. Neustadt, Harvard
cloth $39.95 / paper $16.95

At bookstores and from BROOKINGS BOOKS Call toll-free 1-800-275-1447 or (202) 797-6258 in the Washington area. Or fax your order to (202) 797-6004.

1-800-275-1447

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Wartime Allies

Churchill was right. Americans and Britons did have a special relationship—thousands of them between English women and American servicemen

BY HERBERT MITGANG

Rich Relations: The American Occupation of Britain, 1942-1945
David Reynolds, *Random House, $30*

Once when I was having dinner with Studs Terkel, he mentioned that he had interviewed more than 100 people for an oral history of World War II, but was at a loss for a title. I immediately suggested "The Good War," saying it was the way I and others thought about our generation's war, as compared to the aimless 10-year Vietnam War. After generously crediting me for the title of his book, which received the Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction, the inimitable Studs wrote: "It is a phrase that has been frequently voiced by men of his and my generation, to distinguish the war from other wars, declared and undeclared. Quotation marks have been added, not as a matter of caprice or editorial comment, but simply because the adjective 'good' mated to the noun 'war' is so incongruous."

His wisdom came to mind while reading *Rich Relations*, a highly original book by David Reynolds about a largely unexamined aspect of World War II: the interaction between the Americans stationed in England and the British. Reynolds, one of Britain's leading historians, specializes in studies of Anglo-American relations, and his knowledge shows. He subtitles his new book "The American Occupation of Britain, 1942-1945." The only fault I find with the subtitle is that the word occupation doesn't have quotation marks around it. There are, after all, occupations and "Occupations." The Nazi occupation of conquered Europe systematically led its victims to the gas chambers of Auschwitz; the American "Occupation" of Britain led to victory over tyranny.

Reynolds borrows the word from a comment made by George Orwell in December 1943. "It is difficult to go anywhere in London," Orwell said, "without having the feeling that Britain is now Occupied Territory. The general consensus of opinion seems to be that the only American soldiers with decent manners are the Negroes."

Fortunately, Reynolds looks beyond Orwell's stereotype of the loutish American. He writes that the three million Americans who passed through Britain on the way to battle each had experiences as singular as their own personalities. The cliché went that the Americans were "oversexed, overpaid, overfed, and over here." Less familiar was the Yank riposte that the British Tommy was "undersexed, underpaid, under fed, and under Eisenhower." But behind the wisecracks was a plain truth: The GIs who left their homes to aid Britain and defeat a common enemy were not American Hessians.

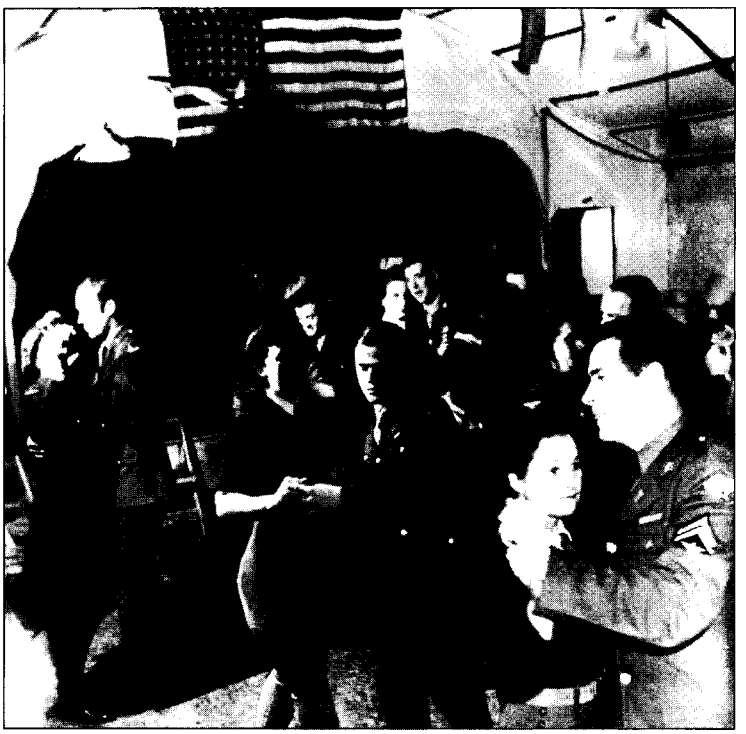
This spring marks the 50th anniversary of V-E Day, followed in the summer by the fiftieth anniversary of Hiroshima and V-J Day. Ironies abound. Now the two strongest nations in Europe and Asia—economically, not militarily—are Germany and Japan. The downfall of the Soviet and satellite states has led to civil, ethnic, and tribal wars around the world. One reads *Rich Relations*

Herbert Mitgang, author of Dangerous Dossiers: Exposing the Secret War Against America's Authors, *was an Army correspondent and a managing editor of* Stars & Stripes *in World War II.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

against a background of unblinkered knowledge of lost empires, shattered alliances, and new hope for stronger international partnerships.

One of the things I found admirable in *Rich Relations* was that Reynolds looks backward as well as inward, deepening the ideas behind his book. He writes that when Britain went to war in 1939, its main ally was France. Neville Chamberlain, then prime minister, said that it was "always best and safest to count on nothing from the Americans except words." As we all know, Prime Minister Winston Churchill had a larger vision, using language to ignite American sympathies for his beleaguered country and to point out the perils the English-speaking nations faced if Hitlerism prevailed. Churchill said that America and England had, as they do now, a "special relationship."



Special relationships: The *real* American-British alliance.

The major part of *Rich Relations* concerns the behavior of Americans in uniform. Reynolds has unearthed scores of official and unofficial reports, criminal and marriage records, letters, diaries, and even wartime polls to show how both allies behaved and what they thought of each other. After a survey of the American Eighth Air Force in 1943, its provost marshal concluded: "In general, the American soldier is imbued with a 'Limey' complex and has not the desired respect for the British. His feeling toward the British does not amount to an active dislike, but is passive and apathetic. Because of this lack of feeling toward the British, he makes no attempt, generally speaking, to get to know them better."

Like other polls and surveys in war or peace that draw broad conclusions about people's thoughts and emotions, this one sounds cockeyed but the author doesn't challenge it. Instead, he cites opinions by other authorities studying the GI psyche, including the anthropologist Margaret Mead, who wrote in 1944 that "as Johnny thinks of home he learns little in England." She, too, noted that the GI (who wasn't called Johnny) had "practically no contact with English people in groups, with family groups, or clubs, or discussion groups." Obviously, Dr. Mead was a better authority on the sex habits of Samoans than of young Yanks on a weekend pass in London, who were far more interested in the wanton pleasures of Piccadilly Circus than discussing with a nice church group their delight on first looking into Chapman's Homer.

The attraction between American soldiers and British women was mutual. One reason, Reynolds suggests, was that American off-duty uniforms were designed to make the Yanks look good, unlike the hobnailed Tommies who had to socialize in what amounted to battle dress. The GIs were paid three times more than their British counterparts and had more money for food, drink, clothing, and gifts. Ground troops had time on their hands while training for D-Day; airmen risking their lives on bombing missions wanted to live life to the fullest when they returned safely. Of course, many British soldiers were fighting in different corners of the world, leaving lonely wives and girlfriends at home. Many British women worked in defense factories to make ends meet in rationed times; they, too, felt a need to relax at dances held on and off American military

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bases. Relationships developed into casual and serious love affairs and unwanted births. Morals loosened for young people enjoying a first taste of independence away from home, just as they did in the United States.

"The biggest headaches were sex and race—relations between free-spending GIs and British women emancipated by wartime, and the management of a segregated Army in a society unused to segregation or indeed to non-whites," Reynolds writes. "On-base, it still mattered if you were a Cracker, a Yankee, a Jew, a Polack. Most American platoons were ethnic potpourris. But off-base, to the British you were all 'Yanks.' And you began to realize that, comparatively speaking, you were all Yanks—that the similarities outweighed the differences in a foreign situation."

The British gained their impression of Americans, Reynolds claims, from characters in American movies. The British Establishment and newspapers considered American pictures vulgar, immoral, and a bad influence. If not exactly role models, many moviegoers found the stars glamorous and exciting. Joseph P. Kennedy, the discredited American ambassador who was removed as an embarrassment, was horrified at the way "a great many people in England believe that our home life, history and even legal practices are typified by motion pictures." He even took offense at *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington,* claiming the film would harm American prestige by making foreign audiences think that "the United States was full of graft, corruption and lawlessness and contains very little in politics that is creditable." Ridiculous as this sounds—especially in light of Kennedy's own financial and romantic ties to Hollywood—many British people did envision the American GI a reflection of screen life.

Of particular concern to the British Establishment was movies' effect on young girls. One Home Office report stated in 1945: "To girls brought up on the cinema, who copied the dress, hair styles, and manners of Hollywood stars, the sudden influx of Americans, speaking like the films, who actually lived in the magic country and who had plenty of money, at once went into the girls' heads. The American attitude toward women, their proneness to spoil a girl, to build up, to exaggerate, talk big, and to act with generosity and flamboyance, helped to make them the most attractive boyfriends."

Rich Relations also treads familiar ground about the conflicts on the command level. In the beginning, there was a certain amount of condescension by the British about the American generals and the green American troops. The Americans were bloodied at Kasserine Pass in Tunisia, but after the defeat they went on to fight as valiantly as the British in Sicily and on the European mainland. Was General Eisenhower a good tactician as well as a remarkable Allied commander? Was Field Marshal Montgomery a brilliant but too-cautious commander? Luckily, the author doesn't venture into such minefields. Reynolds is better on diplomatic relations and largely sticks to his strength. In a book filled with wonderful tidbits, he often comes up with telling quotations. Harold Macmillan, British political advisor at Allied Force Headquarters, explained his philosophy to a new member of his staff in these words:

> You will always permit your American colleague not only to have superior rank to yourself and much higher pay, but also the feeling that he is running the show. This will enable you to run it yourself. We are Greeks in this American Empire. We must run AFHQ as the Greek slaves ran the operations of the Emperor Claudius.

As the war intensified, the British and Americans learned to appreciate each other's skills and traditions. The Yanks who flew on long bombing missions into the German heartland earned the respect of "the few" in the Royal Air Force, who, on their own during the Blitz, had defeated the Luftwaffe before the Eighth Air Force arrived. British civilians watched as the Flying Fortresses took off on early daylight missions, counted the smaller number of shot-up planes returning over their houses and fields in the afternoon, and sadly realized that they would never again have a beer at a pub with lost American friends. And as American infantrymen and paratroopers disappeared from local training grounds and were next heard from after the D-Day landings, the people knew that wartime casualty lists were part of the common heritage paid by Britain and the United States to preserve freedom. On the whole, ordinary Brits loved the Americans for what they were doing, and the wartime aura of gratitude and affection lasted well into the fifties.

Special relationship? Definitely. American occupation? Baloney. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Political Booknotes

Radical Surgery
Joseph Califano
Times Books, $25
By Harris Wofford

The failure of the 103rd Congress to take even the first steps in health care reform left a void in a vital national debate. With a punchy, provocative, and enlightening new book entitled *Radical Surgery*, Joseph Califano, former secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, helps fill that void. In 316 pages of short bursts of simple but often contradictory truths about what he calls our "sick care" system, Califano outlines the problems that plague American health care and points towards a solution.

Halfway through, the book seems maddeningly repetitive. Califano makes the same basic points again and again. Open the book to any page, and Califano's fundamental prescriptions leap out at you. But there's a method in this madness. After enough doses of this medicine, delivered in vivid language, with striking new statistics or personal anecdotes, Califano's prescriptions begin to do their work.

We see Califano's 92-year-old demented mother, with kidney failure, who had been promised by her son not to be sent to die in a hospital, but whose doctor intended to hospitalize her for dialysis and other "heroic" measures to prolong her life. Her son said, "She's ready for God," and took responsibility for letting her die at peace in her own bed, with her husband holding her hand.

Two hundred and twenty-eight pages later, there are the stories of Richard Nixon and Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, each having signed a living will, declining the use of medical machinery to postpone imminent death. Califano hopes that the grace and dignity with which Jackie died will have even more lasting influence on American social customs than the courage she displayed when John Kennedy was assassinated. Califano tells of the brave old Polish Cardinal Wyszynski who said from his sickbed, "There are too many machines and tubes and wires," and asked if United States doctors were sensitive to "the need for one person to touch another."

Califano rails at the bureaucratization of modern medicine, which leaves little time for touching. "What we need from our doctors is less of this new T.L.C.—technology, lasers, and cat scans—and more of the old T.L.C.—tender loving care—grounded in a basic respect for human dignity." He sees that the central truth that the practice of medicine is "a sacred calling, not a for-profit enterprise," is "being choked in the thick underbrush of regulatory and insurance reimbursement rules and crushed in the machinery of modern hospital centers."

Califano knows these modern centers are vital for life-saving and for research but he believes that they, along with the doctor-patient relationship and all the best of American health care, have never been in such peril. The trillion-dollar health care industry, now nearly one-sixth of the nation's economy, is in "portentous turbulence," with doctors, hospitals, health maintenance organizations (HMOs), insurance carriers, and pharmaceutical companies reshaping health care, scrambling into mergers and networks, cooking up new delivery systems, and mounting aggressive marketing campaigns.

The good news Califano draws out of the 1994 health care reform fiasco is the emergence of a political consensus that all Americans should have timely access to care. The bad news is that the debate showed that Murphy's Law was written with America's health care reformers in mind: "Silver Bullet" health care legislation, Califano argues, is doomed to failure.

Califano writes from experience. He confesses his own miscalculations in tinkering with American health care in the sixties and seventies—from his work in Lyndon Johnson's White House as they created Medicaid and Medicare, to leading Jimmy Carter's Department of Health, Education and Welfare. He renounces his earlier obsession with the financing and delivery of care for the sick, and now would have us emphasize health promotion and disease prevention. He points to the pandemic of substance abuse and addiction, the aging of our population, and the rush of technological innovation as the triple-threat to any serious attempt to restrain health care costs.

Throughout this book, the contradictions of Califano's case are showing. On the one hand, this former formidable Washington policy wonk attacks Beltway mentality. "No one," he writes, "is smart enough to write a single law to revamp the entire health care system." Having worked with the health care industry as a private lawyer, as a member of Chrysler Corporation's board, and as founding president of Columbia University's Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, he's been "increasingly struck by the limits of legislative fixes." He argues that "cultural attitudes that influence individual behavior offer greater opportunities to curb costs and increase access than all the laws, regulations, financing gimmicks and theories of the policy wonks sitting in Washington."

Yet after listing a number of the cultural factors that affect our health care system—seat belts, divorce, guns, beer, tobacco, food, poverty, violence, sex, lousy parents—Califano recommends a slew of laws. His prescription includes: stringent gun control legislation; taxation of cigarettes to the point that they are too expensive to be purchased by children; prohibition of vending machines and stiff penalties for sale to minors; similar restraints on the sale and advertising of alcohol; and, above all, campaign finance reform which, he

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

says, will limit the political influence of the health care industry. Califano also calls for the extension of Medicare to all the poor; community-rated insurance premiums; assured coverage regardless of preexisting conditions or employment status; guaranteed portability from job to job; and mandated employer coverage of all employees.

Despite Califano's numerous contradictions, it would be wrong to conclude that he ties himself in a knot. Fundamental campaign finance reform may be as far away as a Congressional majority for an employer mandate to provide health insurance. But Califano's voice of experience, if heard well, could help us move to the next steps. The contradictions in his case are the very contradictions in the system that make reform so difficult. He conveys this complexity not as an excuse for doing nothing, but in order to show how much there is to do.

Human conduct, Califano says, not legislative legerdemain, is the crucial key. The private institutions and governments performing the radical surgery necessary "must use their scalpels with painstaking delicacy in order to preserve and enhance the intimacy and integrity of the doctor- (and nurse-) patient relationship, which is the aorta of any effective system."

"Delicacy" may be too much to ask of the rough-and-tumble mix of politics and money that Califano predicts will prevail in the next decade of health care reform. What Califano asks from the political world are "sensible laws, aimed at the right targets, mandating, encouraging and nourishing individual and institutional conduct that will move the nation toward universal coverage at affordable cost."

But beyond laws, what Califano seeks is a cultural revolution to change the way American individuals and institutions view health. He suggests that the place to start hammering out a technological morality for American medicine is with the American way of death. And the most vital questions of life and death must be reserved to the people.

"The radical surgery that lies ahead," writes Califano, "is too important to be left to the best and the brightest politicians, physicians, and policy gurus. Each of us must be prepared to take a scalpel in hand."

With this fine book, Califano has done his part.

Harris Wofford is a former Senator from Pennsylvania.

The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War
Alan Brinkley
Alfred A. Knopf, $27.50
By John Morton Blum

In *The End of Reform*, Alan Brinkley defines his focus in his subtitle: "New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War," and he maintains that focus throughout the book. Other historians have employed structures similar to his to enclose the terrain of New Deal political economy, Brinkley's chosen turf, and to reach conclusions congruent with his. The archival resources and the contemporary literature of the period command the general organization, as well as the major emphases and interpretations, common to historical treatments since Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.'s influential *Age of Roosevelt*. But while Brinkley does not break new ground, his analysis of the changing agenda of liberalism is both persuasive and important, a product of his thorough and scrupulous research, enhanced by crisp and economical prose.

In the first half of his book, Brinkley examines the impact of the political and economic developments in 1937-38 on the outlook of New Deal liberals. The recession of that period moved them to re-examine policies they had favored since 1933. New Dealers continued to center their concerns on wealth, class, and economic power, on erasing or ameliorating the injustices of corporate capitalism. They also continued, Brinkley observes, to disagree among themselves about social and economic programs, as they had from the begin-

"... savvy observations ... Very thorough."
—Kirkus Reviews

The Media and the Mayor's Race
The Failure of Urban Political Reporting
Phyllis Kaniss
"[Kaniss's] portrayal of how political stories are born and played in newspapers and on radio and television is masterful and makes the book a must-read." —Philadelphia City Paper
This close-up of the 1991 Philadelphia mayor's race gives an unsettling look into the lamentable state of local media coverage of politics nationwide.
416 pages
14 b&w photos
paper $16.95
(also in cloth $39.95)

At bookstores or from
INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS
Bloomington, IN 47404
Orders: 1-800-842-6796
gopher.iupress.indiana.edu
(port 7000)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ning. One school (including Rex Tugwell and Donald Richberg) remained wedded to the associational or corporatist ideas that had led to the creation of the failed National Recovery Administration. In contrast, another camp (that of Tommy Corcoran, Robert Jackson, and James Landis) championed anti-monopoly efforts.

Brinkley describes the varied origins and objectives of both kinds of programs. He goes on to discuss the advocates of countercyclical spending (Marriner Eccles and Leon Henderson, among others), many also anti-monopolists, whose arguments gained coherence and strength from the publication in 1936 of J.M. Keynes's *General Theory*, and gained relevance from the serious downturn of the economy.

It was the Keynesians, of course, who caught the president's ear in 1938, to the distress of budget balancers in the Treasury Department. But, as Brinkley notes, Roosevelt embraced Keynes's countercyclical measures only as an expedient, not out of informed commitment. So, too, the ventures in anti-monopoly studies of the Temporary National Economic Council (TNEC) and the anti-trust actions of Thurman Arnold in the Justice Department. Consequently, the battles over policy had to be fought again in the war years.

The second half of the book recounts the same policies against the backdrop of mobilization, wartime production and procurement, and planning for reconversion and postwar domestic policy. Here too, he is covering familiar terrain, but he does it with learning and insight. In the face of Republican gains in Congress and of increasing public infatuation with consumer spending, Roosevelt made only rhetorical efforts to protect or advance the agenda of "liberals embattled." It is clear that Brinkley's sympathies lie with these liberals.

But rather more than Brinkley chooses to stress, the president was governed by other priorities: the winning of the war, the preservation of national unity, and the imperative need for nurturing the armed services.

In these circumstances, the task of formulating policy fell to the lawyers, financiers, and business executives who Roosevelt recruited to guide the war effort. Lingering liberal hopes for a commonwealth of government and enterprise became impracticable fantasies. So did liberal hopes for strengthening small business. Concurrently, wartime labor policies, the arrival of full employment after a decade of depression, and growing anti-unionism in Congress and out, all operated against what remained of labor militancy and of the always-slim prospect of labor as an independent, postwar political force. Still, as Brinkley allows, "the wartime economy was a spectacular success." This explained the victories of the emerging military-industrial complex in a succession of battles over policy and turf.

Further, the nature of the governments of America's enemies—Germany, Italy, and Japan—made liberals apprehensive about the dangers of statism. Increasingly dubious of possible postwar federal programs to micromanage the economy, liberals found their preferred alternative in the social and macroeconomic recommendations of the National Resources Planning Board.

Countercyclical federal spending, intended to spur private consumption and achieve full employment, along with government outlays tied to expanded programs for social welfare, became the liberal grail. Brinkley is at his best describing the process through which liberals reached this conclusion. In effect, liberals accepted corporate capitalism as it had become.

The book ends with an account of the Employment Act of 1946, which had been introduced as the Full Employment bill. In its earlier version, it was an essential vessel of postwar liberal political economy. But the bill suffered adverse amendments before its enactment and, as Brinkley says, was also decoupled from a "generous welfare state."

During the war, new issues had surfaced—for example, civil rights and the first stirrings of modern feminism. These became parts of what Brinkley calls the rights-based liberalism of postwar politics. In compromising on the Employment Act, liberals were settling for a pale version of their best hopes. This retreat from the issues of political economy which had once absorbed the New Dealers has had unhappy consequences in the "increased inequality and social instability" characteristic of today's "often stagnant economy."

This message, and the way Brinkley delivers it, gives his book its significance. To be sure, he has carefully examined the ideas of only about two dozen liberals in government, along with a few like-minded journalists. But during the New Deal and the war years, the ideas of this elite formed the core of the nation's conscience. Further, the liberals' retreat reflected broad public sentiments. As Brinkley suggests, political economy could now benefit from a return to the New Dealers' preoccupations—and a renaissance of their heroic mood.

John Morton Blum, Sterling professor emeritus of history at Yale University, has written several books about the New Deal, World War II, and American liberalism.

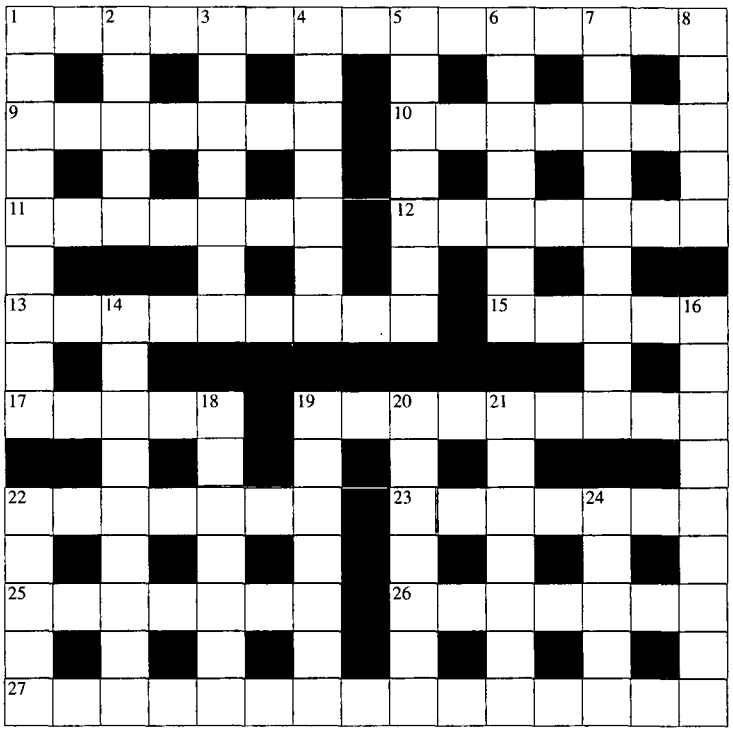
Learn more reading the news:
Spanish
• World news monthly
• $25 annual subscription
German
• World news quarterly
• $18 annual subscription
INTERMEDIATE READING LEVEL
BILINGUAL GLOSSARY
FREE GRAMMAR GUIDE
FOR NEW SUBSCRIBERS
EDUCATIONAL NEWS SERVICE
BOX 60478-WMO FLORENCE, MA 01060
FREE brochure
1-800-600-4494

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Political Puzzle

BY JOHN BARCLAY

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words—thus, (2,3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, like "USA," are treated as one word.



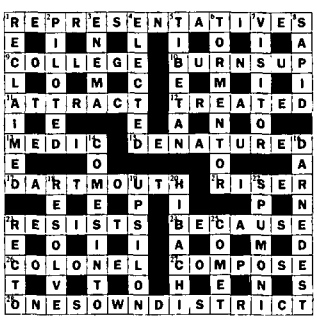
ACROSS

1. D.C. location makes inane panel savvy. (12, 3(abv))
9. 2050 bees assembled for flags. (7)
10. Large profit from song-writing? (7)
11. Stir brine in, if condensed. (2, 5)
12. Reroute relay around princess without hesitation. (7)
13. Surrounds licenses distributed around end of year. (9)
15. Cheat body? (5)
17. Medicine of sorts active in facial spasm. (5)
19. Equal takes in Nixon initially around for, e.g. juggler. (9)
22. Title is arranged for aristocrat. (7)
23. Pastry to exist around mixed chair. (7)
25. Atmosphere and camel it produced. (7)
26. Event thrown around hut post. (4, 3)
27. Hybrid lemon lilac—minor feature of Mall. (7, 8)

DOWN

1. Potomac dwellers? Not every Tom, Dick, or Harry, but one of each. (9)
2. Jackson in catch is plutocrat. (5)
3. Wearing worse clothing, i.e., reeds patched. (7)
4. Having desires gave slut flu. (7)
5. Backs Air Force contractors. (7)
6. Ritually ordains for progress against enemy. (7)
7. British foil muni mail distributed around Eastern Ireland. (9)
8. Abrasive and strange including first of Mohicans. (5)
14. Change diction on train. (9)
16. First defense man or last ref playing. (9)
18. City smart in the past? (7)
19. Irishman and gull form a plan. (7)
20. Bets are off! Do some more cooking. (7)
21. Coin tossed in gold Spanish river. (5)
22. Stand out in Sussex celebration. (5)
24. Top Rhode Island resort. (5)

Answers to last month's puzzle:



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Vital Books!

Now in paperback!

The Gulf Conflict, 1990-1991

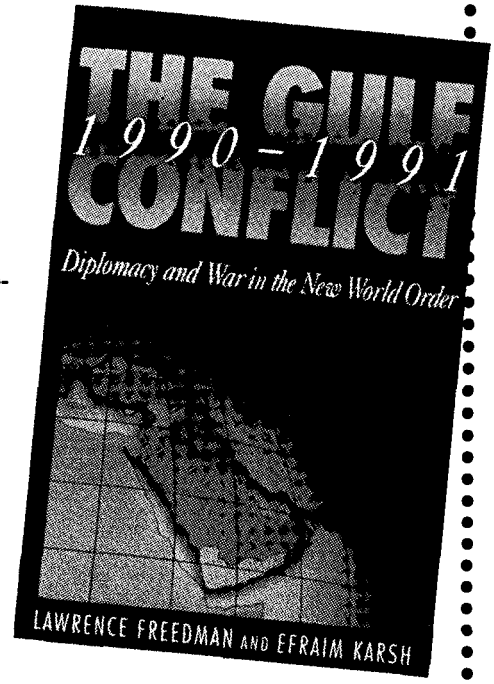
Diplomacy and War in the New World Order

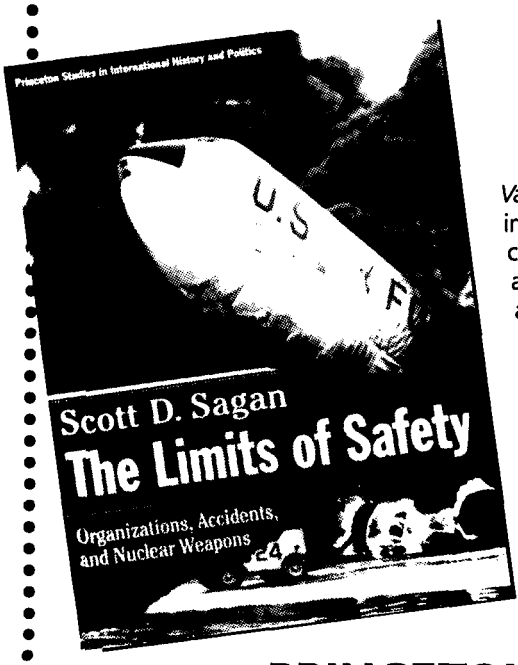
Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh

The Gulf Conflict provides the most authoritative and comprehensive account to date of Iraq's occupation of Kuwait, its expulsion, and the aftermath of the war. Blending compelling narrative history with objective analysis, Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh inquire into the fundamental issues underlying the dispute and probe the strategic calculations of all the participants.

"What [the authors] have succeeded in doing is to bring to the story a wide-angle lens and a histo-rian's detachment. It is unlikely that there will be a better balanced or more comprehensive chronicle of that seminal event."
—*The New York Times Book Review*

Paper: $18.95 ISBN 0-691-03772-8





The Limits of Safety

Organizations, Accidents, and Nuclear Weapons

Scott D. Sagan

Environmental tragedies such as Chernobyl and the *Exxon Valdez* remind us that catastrophic accidents are always possible in a world full of hazardous technologies. Yet, the *apparently* excellent safety record with nuclear weapons has led policy-makers and the public alike to believe that nuclear arsenals can serve as a secure deterrent for the foreseeable future. In this provocative book, Scott Sagan challenges such optimism. Sagan's research into formerly classified archives penetrates the veil of safety that has surrounded U.S. nuclear weapons and reveals a hidden history of frightening "close calls" to disaster.

"Scott Sagan's book is nothing less than a *tour de force*. . . . It is by far the most carefully researched and painstaking study of nuclear weapons safety ever written."
—*Security Studies*

Paper: $14.95 ISBN 0-691-02101-5

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

AVAILABLE AT FINE BOOKSTORES OR DIRECTLY FROM THE PUBLISHER: 800-777-4726

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PROGRESSIVE. CONFRONTATIONAL. INFORMATIVE. FREE-THINKING.

CAN YOU SAY THE SAME ABOUT YOUR PHONE BILL?

Strange as it may sound, thousands of Americans actually look forward to receiving their monthly phone bill.

These are not sad, lonely citizens, desperate for any contact with the outside world. They are among the country's most progressive thinkers. They're Working Assets Long Distance customers.

At Working Assets, we donate 1% of our customers' bills to nonprofit organizations they select. Groups like Planned Parenthood, the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, the ACLU and Amnesty International. We generated $1.4 million dollars for organizations like these in 1994 alone.

And every bill you get will update you on urgent issues where your voice can make a difference. We name key political decision-makers and give you free and easy ways to confront them.

Last year, our customers made their voices heard over 400,000 times – becoming one of the most powerful citizen groups in America.

By the way, there's one more deserving cause you'll be helping when you switch.

Nuclear testing bans.

Health care clinic access.

Banks' discrimination against minorities.

Handgun control.

Just a few victories Working Assets' customers helped win.

Your bank balance. Our basic interstate rates are cheaper than those of AT&T,® MCI® and Sprint.® We give you ***60 FREE MINUTES*** of long distance calls as soon as you sign up. And there are plenty of built-in discounts.

But we never compromise on quality. We use major carriers' lines – so calls are crystal clear. And our customer service is genuinely friendly and efficient.

If you want to save money (not to mention our world) with every call you make, switch to Working Assets Long Distance now.

Call 1-800-788-8588

We'll give you honest answers to any questions you have, and switch you over right away.

And about a month from now, your phone bill should make very interesting reading.

WORKING ASSETS®
Long Distance

By joining I authorize Working Assets Long Distance to become my primary long distance carrier. Working Assets will mail me a certificate good for 60 free minutes of interstate calling at the 3,000-mile night/weekend rate. The certificate can be redeemed by enclosing it into any bill I choose. Then, on the following bill, the 60 free minutes credit will appear. Offer void where prohibited. Rate comparisons effective 1/1/95 and subject to change.

AZ 293-WAM-1

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED